The Middle Ground

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/16464977.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Rape/Non-Con
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham
Additional Tags:	Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Angst, Fluff and Angst, Angst and Fluff and Smut, Fluff, Mating Cycles/In Heat, Past Abuse, Past Child Abuse, Past Rape/Non-con, Past Sexual Abuse, Anxiety Attacks, Panic Attacks, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD, Alpha Hannibal Lecter, Omega Will Graham, Top Hannibal Lecter, Bottom Will Graham, Missionary Position, Holding Hands, Caring Hannibal Lecter, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Will Graham Loves Hannibal Lecter, Love Confessions, Gentle Sex, Gentleness, Making Love, Other Additional Tags to Be Added, Mpreg, Forced Abortion, Pregnant Will Graham, Season/Series 01, Season/Series 02, Episode: s02e13 Mizumono, Canon-Typical Violence, Canonical Character Death, Miscarriage, regretful hannibal lecter, Episode: s03e01 Antipasto, Episode: s03e07 Digestivo, Emotional Hurt, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Tooth-Rotting Fluff, Episode: s03e13 The Wrath of the Lamb, Post-Episode: s03e13 The Wrath of the Lamb, Post-Fall (Hannibal), Implied/Referenced Suicide, First Kiss, Condoms, Warm and Fuzzy Feelings, Blow Jobs, Rimming, Frottage, Domestic Fluff, Domestic Bliss, Miscommunication, Heavy Angst, Knotting, Crying, Crying During Sex, Crying Hannibal Lecter, Basically nobody can keep their shit together, Angst with a Happy Ending, Happy Ending, Eventual Happy Ending, Sad with a Happy Ending
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2018-10-30 Completed: 2019-01-12 Words: 55,334 Chapters: 8/8

The Middle Ground

by wyldefire

Summary

There are joys to be found in agony, heartache to be brought into a more beautiful light.

No one can unring this bell
Unsound this alarm, unbreak my heart new
God knows, I am dissonance
Waiting to be swiftly pulled into tune

I'll go anywhere you want
Anywhere you want me

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1

He didn't know what had possessed him to drive here.

It came over him without warning, the slick dripping down his thighs and staining the seat beneath him. Pain blossomed through his belly, an aching need to be filled wracking against his bones. It had been years since he'd felt it. His meds had kept it from happening, kept his body from turning against him and giving into its own carnality. But now they had betrayed him, left his body to revert to what it was truly made to do. The hollow ache spreading deep through his bones, the dampness between his thighs, the oily slick bleeding through his clothes.

His fingers had tensed around the wheel, heart stopping in his chest as tears sprung up in his eyes. He wasn't quite sure what brought them there, whether it be the memories that had always been associated with his heat, or the fear that came with it, or the pain. Oh, god, the pain. Wolf Trap was too far away, and he couldn't drive like this, not with his mind in a frenzy and the ache that spread through his entire body growing stronger.

He went to the first person that he could think of. The only person that he could think of.

His jeans were ruined by the time he got to the door, and he felt a sudden pang of fear. Christ, anyone within a mile radius could smell him at this point. Could attract them. Could lure them here.

Fuck.

Trembling hands ran down his face, the sweat dripping down his palms as his chest began to heave. Weak and whimpering like some common bitch, he reached up and knocked against the heavy wooden door, pounding as hard as weak hands would allow. He needed to get away from the threat, needed to find safety within Hannibal's walls, knowing that he was the only one who could provide for him.

It was fucking humiliating. What remained of Will's conscious thought turned against himself, angry that he would allow for this to happen, pissed off that he would be reduced to this. Part of him wanted to scream, infuriated that he would allow himself to become this cowering, begging omega, despising the fact that he came seeking an alpha to…

He hated alphas. He had always hated alphas. Hannibal was the only one that he could stand to be around, the only one that didn't make him want to lash out, or run, or hide.

Perhaps it was understandable, though. If anyone had a reason to hate alphas, it was him.

He had presented as an omega at the age of twelve, earlier than the majority of his peers. He had always figured that he'd present as an alpha, it being almost expected of him. His father was an alpha, his father's father had been an alpha, and so on down the line. But fate had been cruel to him, and three days after his twelfth birthday, he'd went into his first heat.

It hadn't been so bad at first. Far from pleasant, sure, but nothing so unmanageable. He'd spent the entire day locked in his room, masturbating when he wasn't sleeping, sleeping when he wasn't masturbating. It was uncomfortable, painful at times, but it had been okay, aside from some cruel remarks from his father. Nothing particularly out of the ordinary for him, anyway.

Then the old fool got smart. Ever opportunistic, he always found some way to exploit the situation to work to his own benefit. Two days into his first heat, Will's father decided to bring over his uncle. The uncle who spent his weekends on their couch getting drunk with his father, an uncle who liked to peek in whenever Will was getting dressed.

That had been the first one. The next six years were spent with his father whoring him off to the highest bidder for one week every month, despite his protests and pleas and begs for him to stop.

It always hurt. It always hurt so damn much.

Heat became synonymous with tear-stained pillows and blood-soaked sheets. His thighs were always stained red for at least a week after, a red that hours beneath the showerhead couldn't wash away entirely. Ingrained into his very flesh, settling deep within his pores, staining down to the bone. It became synonymous with misery and greasy old men and dread and pain. But that wasn't the worst of it.

He had found out two weeks after his fourteenth birthday that he was pregnant.

His father beat him when he missed his heat. He was bruised and bloodied by the end of it, and Will later figured that he had made some attempt at inducing a miscarriage. But the little cluster of cells growing within his womb had been a fighter, refusing to die until…

Will had begged for his father to let him keep it, if for no other reason than the fact that it would provide some protection from his father's friends for the next nine months. No more heats, no more dirty alphas coming into his room at all hours of the day to fuck him and knot him until they had had their fill. Even if not for the sake of his protection, there was another life growing inside of him, and how could he just *kill* it?

His pleas had fallen on deaf ears. A pregnancy would mean that his father would have to go through nine months without the cash from his friends. A pregnancy would end in just another mouth to feed. A pregnancy would mean that his secret would be out. The old man waited months before finally taking him to the abortion clinic, too lazy to get up and drag him there. Eighteen weeks, he waited, eighteen weeks. He waited until Will's belly was already beginning to swell, waited until Will could feel it kicking and moving around inside of him, before forcing him to get rid of it.

And things were business as usual after that. He started going into heat again, and his dad started inviting his friends over again, and life went on like that for four more years, until Will turned eighteen and he escaped to Wolf Trap. He immediately started on heat suppressants, refused to go through his heat any longer, and he'd moved on. He lived life to the best of his ability, but the anxiety never really went away around alphas.

Not with Hannibal, though. He'd never been afraid of Hannibal.

The memories hit him like a tidal wave as he stood on Hannibal's doorstep, shifting uncomfortably as more slick pulsed from him. He hadn't felt that familiar gush of slick between his thighs, dripping down his legs, since he was eighteen.

The door flew open to reveal Hannibal Lecter, dressed in nothing but a red sweater and a robe. Eyes blew wide at the very sight of the omega, quickly ushering him inside, shutting the door behind him without question or preamble. Will shuffled inside, tears staining his cheeks and sweat dripping from every pore. He could hardly breathe, and everything inside of him burned, and he needed…

He hadn't taken a knot in years. He'd been with betas before, even an omega or two, but he never went anywhere near alphas. But now…

"I don't know what happened. I was fine, I was fine, and suddenly there was slick everywhere and everything hurts and I can't breathe, fuck, I can't breathe," he cried, voice shaking, not caring for preamble and *'how do you do'*s. There was one dominating train of thought, above all else and all other. He needed his alpha.

His alpha. He'd never said that before.

He supposed that he'd known it since the beginning, but hadn't wanted to admit it. They talked about soul mates, how you just *knew* when you saw them. It hadn't quite been like that. Will had been uninterested at first, too blinded by his own annoyance with some attempted psychoanalysis to see him as anything other than just another fucking alpha.

But he grew to know it, no matter how much of him wanted to deny it. It had happened slowly, gathered moments solidifying some bond between them. When they were laughing over breakfast. When Hannibal drew his eyes away from Garrett Jacob Hobbs, calling him back to earth. When their eyes met as his hand clasped over Abigail's throat, holding the world with it, allowing time to slow for just a moment. Hannibal had always held some grasp on him. There was something to draw them together, some conjoinment, some bond.

"I don't know what's happening," Will breathed.

"Well I hardly figured that it was something that could be easily mistaken," Hannibal said. "You seem to be in heat."

Will let out a shuddered breath at the word. He hated that word.

But there was something in the way it came from Hannibal's lips that drew away the fear, assurance that it wasn't so bad as it seemed. Like nothing bad would happen to him, like no one was going to hurt him, like he could be vulnerable without being taken advantage of. Like heat was something that was normal, okay, safe. *Welcome,* even.

"It's not possible," he sobbed, trembling. He had always been careful, taking every precaution to assure that this couldn't happen. He'd bought the most powerful suppressants

on the market, had swallowed pills every day for years and years now. “I'm on suppressants,” was all that he could sputter out through his tears.

“Immunities can be built up. This is not the first time something like this has happened,” Hannibal explained, voice steady and calm in some attempt to bring him down from his panic. “Breathe, *mylimasis.* Your body is only doing what it is built to do.”

Will was trembling, the scent of fever and sex rolling off of him. It was overwhelming, overpowering, enough to smother and suffocate. Hannibal could have drowned in it and have died a happy man.

Call it intuition, call it a sense, but Hannibal had known the day he’d met him that the man who stood before him was destined to be his mate. Divine intervention, pulled together by the gods themselves, even if Will hadn’t known it without a little push.

Manipulations had come into play, of course. He had wanted to see what might happen, perhaps cruel and morbid curiosity getting the better of him. He had needed to know if Will felt it too, if he wanted it as badly as he did, and he did, so it seemed. Nothing had taken the omega straight into his open arms but his own free will. Will had wanted this just as much as he did. Will Graham loved him. Terrified as he was, Will Graham loved him.

“I can't…” Will whimpered.

Terrified, cold, the man who Hannibal had revered as a god among men cowering and pitiful before him. For just a moment, the doctor almost felt something akin to guilt. He knew the story, and the things that Will had come to associate his heat with, but Hannibal was determined to rewrite his history. He had made the choice to start a problem to solve it, like the arsonist firefighter, lighting the world ablaze just to play the hero.

“Hush, dear boy. You're going to be okay. This is natural. This is what your body was built to do. This is what you were designed for,” Hannibal assured softly.

Fingers met damp curls, slowly pushing them back as the electricity ignited within his fingers, the mere brush of fingertips going straight to his cock. His rut was setting in, slowly eating away at his rationality, but he kept himself steady. Demand and control were not what he sought after tonight. Hannibal would show him all the reverence of a deity, bowing down to the only god that he had ever cared to worship.

“I can’t do it. I can’t do it. I’ve never been through heat by myself, I can’t do it, I can’t do it. I don’t… I can’t do it, Hannibal. I don’t want to do this, I don’t want to go through this, please, I don’t… I can’t...” Will sobbed, his voice wracked and body trembling as he struggled to keep himself upright. He wanted to collapse, let the world implode on him, crush him beneath its weight rather than let his heat take him under.

“Hush, Will… Breathe, my love,” Hannibal whispered. He reached down slowly, taking Will’s hand in his own, holding him tightly, offering him an anchor, a stronghold as he held tight. “Would you allow for me to service you through your heat? You are free to decline, I will force nothing upon you, but I would help you if you asked.”

Will gulped down hard, hands shaking at his eyes met the alpha's. He wore a look of compassion, of love, of utter reverence. A look unmistakable as anything less, a gaze that wrote stories and sonnets of his love. Hannibal Lecter was in love with him.

Maybe he had been for awhile.

And maybe Will could find the same feelings within himself. Love and reverence and longing. A longing that led him to his doorstep, past the threshold and into his arms. Maybe Will was in love with him too. Irrevocably, desperately, hopelessly in love with him.

Will bit down hard on his lip as another pulse of slick gushed from his hole, dripping down his legs. Pleading eyes stared down on him, as if prayers were being uttered to every deity that may or may not have existed at any point in human history. Prayers begging for a yes, prayers begging to the touch of a lover, prayers begging to be granted entrance into the sacred temple where he would fall to his knees and worship his gods.

"Would you have me? Would you want me?" Hannibal breathed.

"Yes."

Tears of joy could have sprung like fountains to his eyes, but he settled upon a smile and a nod. He reached down and took Will's hands in his own. Warm hands, callused and damp with sweat, cradled gently in his own. Gently, as not to shatter what composure remained, he led the omega toward the bedroom.

He felt Will's tensions rise the moment the younger man laid eyes on the bed. He felt his entire body tense, closing off to him as his anxieties rose, skyrocketing. Slowly, Hannibal inched closer, offering every opportunity to pull away, to say no, to change his mind. But there was no denial, no rejection as Hannibal's lips pressed softly against Will's, just enough to soothe his frazzled mind.

His lips tasted sweeter than what Will had imagined. He had always imagined his kiss being bittersweet, like wine and blood, but there instead lay something sweeter than that. Will noted that his scent had changed, too, as he devolved into his rut just from being near the omega. He could remember that alphas in rut usually had a musky scent, sharp and dirty, damn near offensive. But Hannibal was different, sweeter, warmer - of course he was. Bastard was always different from other alphas.

"You're okay. You're safe," Hannibal assured softly, fingers pushing through dark curls before laying his hand to rest on the side of his neck, just over his mating gland.

"I'm in heat," Will murmured, speaking it like a death sentence.

Will had only spoken of the sexual abuse that he had suffered in his childhood once, nearly in passing. Such traumas had left him scarred, equating heat with acts of torture, equating the natural inclinations of his biology to rape.

Consider it an unorthodox form of therapy. Perhaps this was the only way that Will could learn to heal. To be taken care of, to be shown the inclinations of his biology in a more

beautiful light. The act of two surrendering to their own primal urges, coming together to create life between them, abandoning any and all social graces for the sake of coming together as one… It was all that Hannibal had ever wanted for him.

“Breathe, *mylimasis.* I am not like the men who hurt you,” Hannibal said, voice just above a whisper, wrapping his arms tight around the omega's waist. Hannibal clung to him, cradling him tightly in his arms, until all resistance left his bones, before gently guiding him onto the bed, laying him down on satin sheets.

Hannibal undressed him slowly, slipping his shoes off first. Hannibal touched him like his fingertips were grazing the skin a god, with all reverence and worship. His jeans came off next, a whine torn from the omega’s throat as he did so. The ache inside of him grew more insistent as the cool air hit his slick-soaked legs, a sharp throb shooting through his cock. Hannibal took notice of his discomfort and did away with the foreplay and worship, instead opting to free him of the constraints of his clothes.

Vulnerability was not something that Will allowed himself to feel, and yet here he was. Sprawled on his back, laid out for the alpha to gaze down upon with hungry eyes, waiting to be fucked and filled and knotted and bred. The last time he had been laid out like this…

He was terrified. Terrified of what his body was forcing him through, terrified of the memories that it brought back. His mind seized, attempting to crawl back down familiar pathways of dissociation to escape from the pain. His body was designed to go into heat, but his mind couldn’t handle it. But it didn't matter. It didn’t matter what he wanted. It didn’t matter that there was a surge of panic coursing through him. His instinct was telling him to fuck. His instinct was telling him to breed. And before long, his instinct was going to win.

“I… I can't…” Will whimpered.

“Shh, mylimasis. Let me take care of you,” Hannibal said, straddling the omega’s legs and leaning down to claim his lips.

Slowly, the alpha let his fingers drift down his chest, gently taking the hardened nub between his fingers and massaging lightly in an attempt to bring him pleasure. The men who hurt him had never cared about his pleasure. Their motivations were selfish, hungry, vile. His pleasure had never been of importance. He had been used as nothing more than a hole to fuck, nothing but a piece of meat for starving men. They would have never taken care of him in the way that he deserved to be taken care of.

Will let out a small whine, bucking up against his touch. He would have never thought that the very brush of his fingers over his erect nipples would be enough to send spikes of want and longing through him, but there he was, whining and pleading beneath his alpha. He felt something between fear and excitement and arousal and want and need and terror, a mess of emotions that Will didn’t care to place. The only things that he knew in that moment were that he was in love with Hannibal Lecter, and that he was terrified of him.

He had never been afraid of Hannibal, not once. There had always been an ease between them, an understanding, something calming about his presence. But now, thoughts intruding and slamming against his cranium, drowning and smothering him… Fear gripped him tight,

and he couldn't help but expect the pain that had always come with heat. He couldn't breathe. He couldn't breathe.

"Will," Hannibal murmured. He moved away from his nipple, rather opting to run fingers through his curls in an attempt to soothe his tremors, stop the pain, force out all of those terrors that still gripped him. He was afraid of losing control again. He was afraid of losing himself, afraid of being hurt again, afraid that all of the people who had hurt him would come back to take advantage of him again. But, as Hannibal claimed his lips again, vows were made in silence. Hannibal would never let the bad men touch him again; not even within the realm of his overactive imagination.

Will melted into Hannibal's kiss. The taste of his lips, the flick of his tongue, the feeling of his breath intertwined with the omega's… It reminded him of who he was with. His heat wasn't paramount when their lips met, and he almost forgot about the hollow ache in his belly when Hannibal's lips met his. He was gentle. Kind. None of his abusers had ever done that.

"It's going to be alright," Hannibal whispered, pressing his forehead against the omega's. "We won't do anything that you don't want to. The situation is yours to control. What do you want from me? I will do my best to provide it."

Will couldn't think, couldn't speak in coherent sentences as his heat grew more insistent, pulling him deeper and deeper beneath the waves as his own carnality took him under. He couldn't think about anything else. He just needed sex, even if it hurt him. He had felt the same way as a child. He had hated every second of it, left terrified and trembling beneath dirty sheets in the aftermath each time, scarred and damaged a little more each time. But that hadn't shut up his pleading cries as he begged for a knot, needing it no matter how much he didn't want it.

"Knot," Will breathed, voice shaking as his trembling hands wrapped around the sides of Hannibal's neck. He felt dirty for wanting it, felt weak for needing it. "I want your knot."

He was normally more eloquent. But he felt his heat taking over as he began to lose any thought other than *need to fuck, need to breed, need a knot.*

Hannibal smiled softly. He pressed his lips against the side of his omega's neck. He wanted little more than to mark him then and there, claim him as his own, but he decided that Will deserved better than that. He would mate with him when they were both ready. When Will wanted him. When Will asked him. He wanted Will to come to him himself.

And the day would come, undoubtedly, when Will would long to bond with him. Perhaps not tonight, but one day. Hearing those words from Will's lips were all of the affirmation that he needed. Will wanted him. In the haze of heat, he had come here, had come to him, begging to be knotted and bred by *him.* And under the haze of his own coming rut, Hannibal couldn't help but grow harder at the thought of it, knot beginning to swell between his legs. He wasn't going to last long.

"Let me take care of you, *mylimasis,"* Hannibal breathed like a vow.

Slowly, gingerly, he slipped two fingers between his legs, probing gently at his rim until Will let out a quiet moan, a plead for more. He pushed, feeling the tight ring of muscle give way beneath his touch. He was tight after all of these years, but the slick was more than enough to make the breach painless. He was dripping wet, slick coating his thighs, drenching Hannibal's palm, leaving a dark patch in the sheets beneath him. Hannibal hardly minded though, fingers pumping in and out of him slowly, scissoring him open, grazing over his prostate with each movement, drawing small moans from his lips.

"Such a good omega," Hannibal murmured. "My good omega."

Will let out a small whine, rocking on his fingers. His attackers had never bothered with gentleness. They were always rough with him, slamming into him with no preparation, leaving him in a mess of come and slick and blood afterward. But Hannibal was gentle, preparing him for their consummation, for their bonding. Will grasped at the sheets, rocking against him. It felt good. *God,* it felt good.

"Alpha…" Will pleaded.

Hannibal pressed in a third finger, spreading him wide, opening him enough to fit his length, to accommodate his knot. Will's moans became constant, voice trembling with his pleasure as he rocked down on his fingers. The fear was forgotten, smothered beneath the pleasure offered.

The fear that had risen up in Will was calmed by the pumping of his fingers, the rhythmic glide of slick-soaked digits brushing up against his prostate. His heat began to wear at the sharp edges of his mind, dulling the parts that cut to something softer. Hannibal watched as he fell back into the sheets, moaning as he rocked in time with the thrusting of Hannibal's fingers, pushing back against him, hole hungry to devour whatever was being offered.

Still, this could only last for so long.

Hannibal's fingers slipped from between his legs, rather opting to graze over his thighs, smearing the slick down his flesh. Trembling thighs, entirety of him shaking with the loss of contact, the cold air brushing against his exposed hole. Unpleasant and hollow and needing to be filled.

Hannibal slowly rose to his knees before leaning over top of his omega, glancing down between them as he took his cock in one hand, giving himself a few cursory pumps, foreskin sliding over the glistening head of his cock. He had once taken some narcissistic sense of pride in the length of his cock, but feeling Will whimpering beneath him, he almost wished himself to be smaller. The sight would be intimidating, especially for an omega having gone so long without taking a proper knot. He prioritized Will's comfort above all else, wanted to take away the fear, but there was nothing more to be done.

Will's eyes found his cock, and there was something mesmerizing and terrifying about it. He was mesmerized by the movement of his hands, the glide of his foreskin. In equal parts, he found himself seizing up again, the familiar tightening in his chest threatening to strangle him.

Hannibal lined himself up with the omega's leaking hole, feeling the slick pulse against his cockhead in response to the graze of his touch, but it was nothing more than biological instinct. It wasn't Will. It wasn't his desire or need driving him to it.

Will let out a shaking whimper, the pang of fear spreading through him. He hadn't felt this sensation since he was a child, since some stranger had pinned him down to fuck him, to take his pleasure and leave. The feeling of a slick, wet cockhead pressing against his weeping rim took him back to his childhood bedroom. A hole punched into the wall above his bed covered sloppily by a Pink Floyd poster, sheets still reeking of old men, red stains bleeding through the sheets and staining the mattress…

No.

He forced his eyes upward. He could feel the tears stinging in them as he forced his eyes past Hannibal, up toward the ceiling as his fingers grasped at the sheets beneath him. Satin, not flannel. There was no water damage to this roof. The graze of his fingers didn't send jolts of pain coursing through his very bones. There were no bruises forced into his skin, yellowing and staining in the weeks following his heat.

"Mylimasis," Hannibal breathed, sensing his omega's fear. The haze of his heat wasn't enough to block out the trauma, wasn't enough to stop the memories. "We can stop."

"No," Will barked out, voice harsh and demanding. "Just do it. Just get it over with."

His determination to get through it didn't strangle the terrified whimper that escaped his throat, eyes clamped shut as the alpha pushed his cockhead past his sphincter. He moved slowly, struggling to keep his omega calm, but each time he pressed in further, it earned a shudder from Will, each accompanied by a sharp whine.

Hannibal stilled within him, the act requiring some great amounts of strength. He paused, raising both hands, lingering pressed just past the omega's sphincter. He held himself still with trembling thighs, coaxing Will to take his hands in his own. "Hold my hands, Will," Hannibal whispered.

The omega obeyed without question, reaching up and lacing his fingers through the alpha's. He let out a shuddered breath as he clung tight to Hannibal's hands, eyes clenched shut tightly, heart slamming in his chest. His basic instinct told him to take his alpha's knot, to slam deep into him, mate and breed him, but the whimpering little boy inside of him still feared alphas. Even *his* alpha.

"You're in control. Squeeze my hands. Tighten when you want me to push in, loosen when you want me to pull out. Let go of one hand if you want me to take control, let go of both and we'll stop. Do you understand?" Hannibal explained.

Will gulped down hard and nodded. If not for his own fear and the haze of his heat clouding his mind, he would have been more grateful, but for now he couldn't acknowledge the generosity and compassion, only registering his own need and his own fear.

Closing his eyes, the omega pressed his head back against the pillows, adjusting to the feeling of fullness. The tip of Hannibal's cock was hardly inside, and he already felt full to bursting. And yet, it wasn't nearly enough to satisfy and satiate. He needed more, needed his alpha's knot, needed him to fill the hollow ache that filled him now. He exhaled slowly before squeezing the alpha's hands hard.

Hannibal pushed in slowly, the omega's twitching hole accommodating to his length. Will let out a small sound beneath him, though it was no longer the terrified whimper of a man who had seen too much, felt too much, been through too much. It was rather a small sound of pleasure the alpha's cock brushed up against his prostate. He was enjoying this.

The alpha sunk into the hilt as the omega let out a sigh, his hands remaining squeezed tight against Hannibal's. Hannibal ran his thumb over Will's, gentle with him. Small gestures of love, of affection, making certain that Will Graham knew that he was adored.

"Feels good, Han," Will breathed, eyes rolled back, head pressed against the pillows, chest heaving as he adjusted to the feeling of fullness.

"Perfect, *mylimasis*. Perfect. Like you were made for this," Hannibal whispered. "Made for me."

Will sighed. He felt a warm feeling wash over him as he squeezed tight around him, shifting as he accustomed himself to the length and girth. He was big, cock heavy and fat inside of him, taking some adjusting before he got used to the feeling of it inside of him. His shifting earned him a soft groan from his alpha, the squeezing and contracting around his cock leaving him breathless. His face contorted into one of pleasure, eyes squeezed shut as Will settled down on his cock. The sight above him made him want it more, the sight something purely exquisite, and fucking pornographic.

It took him a moment to settle on a position, another moment to adjust before he slowly began to loosen his grip, and Hannibal followed suit, slowly unsheathing himself from the omega's leaking hole. Will let out a moan as the alpha's cock brushed against his prostate again, savoring the slow drag of his cock moving inside of him.

Will paused once the tip of his cock was all that remained sheathed inside of him, and slowly began to squeeze again. Each brush of his prostate was calculated, hips aimed and pointed as hands and hips began to work at a complimentary pace, Hannibal's hips beginning to thrust.

It was against his nature to be so gentle. Alpha instinct dictated something rougher, something desperate. It would dictate that he pound into him at a fervent pace, with intentions of mating and breeding his omega. It would dictate that he knot quickly, and often, over and over, ensuring insemination and conception within his womb. It demanded animalistic fucking, barely recognizable as human.

But he had always been a man of great self-control, and that was what he would maintain. He kept in time with the pace of Will's hands as he began to slowly thrust into him, setting an easy pace, allowing the omega to adjust to the sensation. Years upon years of denial of his true instinct and biology had left him needing time to relearn the way his body was meant to function. His body was readjusting to the sensation of heat and the presence of a cock

between his legs, the entirety of the experience a bit uncomfortable, but Hannibal would be patient.

Patience allowed him to savor the feeling. The sight beneath him could have brought him to tears as the fear and distrust faded away into bliss, devolving into a more natural state. The bond between them took form, solidifying within his chest as he made love to his omega. The bond they shared was no longer simply intellectual, or emotional, or spiritual. It was physical. It was sexual. It was complete.

"Aš tave myliu, mylimasis," Hannibal murmured, leaning over the omega and claiming his mouth, pressing his hands back against the bed, still moving in time with the rhythmic clench and unclench of his fingers as they began to pick up speed.

Will melted into his kiss, smiling against his alpha's lips. The fear that had taken him was gone now, like nothing had ever happened. As if no one had ever touched him, as if no one had ever violated him, as if no one had ever taken away his innocence.

Of course, he didn't fool himself into thinking that a good fuck would take away the nightmares, but it was a step.

He had never thought that he would find some true mate, some soulmate, some alpha that he was destined to be with. But he supposed that he'd always known it. He was in love with Hannibal Lecter, and had been from the day that he met him. And finally, finally, they found consummation.

Will felt the hollow ache begin to deepen in him, and he was no longer so afraid of it. It felt natural, like this was what he was built to do, like this was what his body was made for. His body was made to go into heat, to live from heat to heat and rut to rut, to make love to his alpha over and over, to be knotted over and over, to be bred over and over. This was what he was made for. This was what he was supposed to do.

Will let one hand slip from beneath Hannibal's, letting the alpha take full reign, letting him take what he needed. They both needed more than this. The omega reached up, curling his fingers around the side of his alpha's neck and deepening their kiss as he wrapped his legs tight around his waist. He wanted this. He needed this.

"Knot me. Breed me," Will begged, voice coming out somewhat pathetic, somewhat desperate for what was bound to come next. *"Please,* alpha."

Something carnal overtook him, something utterly primal overpowering him as his hips picked up speed, slamming deep into Will. The omega's moans rang out from beneath him, begging for more, begging to be filled and bred like a proper omega.

Hannibal would always treat him with all the reverence of a god, bowing down to worship him whenever he asked. He was anything but a common breeding bitch, begging to be fucked and filled at any given opportunity. But under the guise of heat and rut, Hannibal swore that he could turn him into one. Made to be fucked and filled, made to carry his children over and over again.

“Such a good boy, Will,” Hannibal huffed. “Going to fill you with my seed. Going to make your belly swell with my pups. Blossom with my litter. Everyone’s going to know who you belong to.”

He couldn’t help but become infatuated with the idea. The entire world seeing the proof of their love, the proof of their consummation, the life created within Will’s body. He wanted the tangible reminder of these nights. He wanted to create something beautiful within him, something beautiful between them. Oh, he wanted it.

“Mine,” Hannibal growled.

“Yours,” Will whimpered, holding tight to his alpha.

Will wanted it. He wanted to be bred, wanted to be tied to the alpha, wanted no one else. Hannibal Lecter made him want to be an omega. Hannibal Lecter made him want the bond that he had sworn off years ago. Hannibal Lecter made him want it.

Hannibal snaked a hand between them, wrapping his fingers around Will’s cock, stroking him quickly toward completion. He wanted to knot him to the feeling of his walls contracting around him, wanted to come with him. In part, it was more for Will’s sake than his own. Knotting for the first time tended to be painful, the stretch and burn of taking a swollen knot uncomfortable at best. But pain was far from what he wanted Will to experience. He wanted the omega to orgasm through his knotting, come while being bred. He wanted to take his pain and bring him into ecstasy, driving him to the point of pleasured agony.

Will bucked up against his touch, the slamming against his prostate mixed with the stroke of the alpha’s hand leaving him panting, damn near screaming. Each movement forced his voice louder, until he was crying out loud enough to wake the neighbors, enough to wake the whole damn country.

“I'm going to knot you, Will,” Hannibal said, pressing his lips against the omega’s ear. “It's going to hurt. But if you want me to breed you, you’re going to need to let me do it. I’m going to fill you with my pups. Is that what you want?”

The omega nodded hard. He wanted it. *Oh,* he wanted it. He wanted to be filled with the alpha’s pups, wanted his belly to swell with Hannibal Lecter’s litter. He wanted Hannibal to be proud of him for carrying his children, wanted to feel them kicking inside of him, wanted to be a good omega for his alpha. Will wanted to mate with him, he wanted to be owned, to belong to his alpha, and vice versa. He wanted this to last, wanted this to be their conjoinment. He wanted to spend the rest of his days with Hannibal Lecter.

Will let out a whine, bucking into his hand. He felt the tug beginning to sting at his rim as Hannibal’s knot, thickened and hard, began to enter his body. Will’s voice shook and his entire body trembled as the doctor pushed himself inside, the sudden shift in girth stinging at his rim. It hurt, but Hannibal’s hand stroking him quickly and his length brushed against his prostate, it was a symphony of pleasure and pain and Will could hardly breathe.

“Breed me, alpha, please, knot me, gonna come, need your knot,” Will babbled as the thickest part of the alpha’s knot pressed into him, pushing past his rim, the omega nearly

screaming.

Will threw his head back in pleasure as his orgasm finally overtook him, his body contracting tight as Hannibal's knot popped past his rim, the alpha's orgasm following suit. The warmth of his alpha's semen filling him left him rocking against his knot, wanting it deeper within him, the damp feeling milking his orgasm. Will's seed splashed between them, leaving them sticky and wet, but he couldn't find it within himself to care. He was knotted and sated and being bred like a proper omega… He had never felt quite so at ease.

Will let out a quiet purr as Hannibal's arms curled tighter around him, pressing his lips just beneath the omega's earlobe. He was content, any of the fear that had plagued him gone now as he pressed closer to his alpha, the feeling of warmth filling his womb for the first time since he was a child. And for the first time, instead of disgust, he felt at peace with it.

Perhaps he was not healed. Perhaps he was not whole. Perhaps the nightmares would forever plague him, until his dying days. But there were steps made, leaps and bounds toward recovery. Perhaps he could find peace in it, perhaps he could fall in love with this mess of theirs.

Hannibal smiled sleepily as he rocked deeper within the omega's tight hole, pushing his seed deeper and deeper into his fertile body. Whether it be instinct and rut, or if he was simply curious to see what might happen, Hannibal Lecter was determined to breed him. He was determined to see Will Graham pregnant with his child. He wanted Will Graham to create something beautiful with him, wanted the omega to carry his child, and he was not going to stop until he did. And judging by the way that Will purred and moaned with each wave of the alpha's orgasm, Will wanted the same.

"Such a good boy… Such a good omega…" Hannibal murmured. *"Aš tave myliu, mylimasis*... My omega."

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Well would you look at that. Angst.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will had missed his heat.

He had gone back to Hannibal, time and time again; he would always come back. Some unspoken bond drew them together, cosmic forces and gravity bringing them colliding time and time again. After his name had been cleared, he found himself back at Hannibal's doorstep, despite anger, despite pain, despite hatred. He returned to him again and again, and even in moments defined by bloodlust, he still found himself knocking.

All apart of the plan, he convinced himself. Nothing more.

Part of the plan to catch a monster, part of the plan to lock him behind bars. He spent his first heat freed with Hannibal, despite his anger, despite his hatred. There were moments when it no longer felt like hatred, moments when the distinct lines of where their relationship stood grew hazy. There were moments when he could be convinced that he was in love.

There were moments such as these over the course of the past month. Moments when he doubted his resolve, moments when he wanted to run away with him into the dark. There were moments to be looked forward to.

His next heat was meant to come. He waited for it to come, waited for a return to Hannibal's home for the week, waited for intimate moments shared. They were moments that did not come.

He cursed himself for not being more careful. It was a miracle that they had gone this long, but Will should have known that his body would reset after awhile. The heat suppressants were never going to make him permanently infertile. They should have used condoms, he should have gone on birth control, he should have done *something.*

But he supposed there had been some part of him, some foolish part of him, that had wanted this from the beginning. With Hannibal's knot buried deep inside of him, this was what he had begged for, what he had ached for. Try as he might have to blame it on nothing more than heat talk, too fogged with the pheromones to even know what he was saying, he couldn't deny that some part of him had wanted it in his sobriety. Some part of his subconscious that had longed for it, some part of him that had wanted to conceive. He would've worked harder to prevent it out of heat if he hadn't wanted it. He had brought this upon himself.

After a week of denying and denying and praying and denying, he caved. Will was a week late when he finally went out and bought a pregnancy test.

He'd bought it with shaking hands and weak knees, but he had gathered up the courage to buy it. He could feel all eyes on him, silent and judging. Knocked up with a monster's baby. Carrying the spawn of the devil himself, some dark creature to wreak havoc upon the earth should it ever see the light of day. They stood, watching, glowering, the burden of the fall of mankind resting upon his shoulders and growing in his womb.

Of course, no one actually knew him. No one knew his name, or what he had done. Nobody knew what he was carrying inside of him, whose baby it was. Nobody cared about him or his personal affairs, fucked up as they were.

He loved Hannibal Lecter, and hated him. He wanted to run away with him, and wanted to see him behind bars. He wanted to hold to his morality and abandon it entirely. Jack or Hannibal, right or wrong, man or monster… He was quickly approaching a fork in the road and a baby was going to do nothing but complicate matters.

It should have been the obvious choice. It had been the plan all along, really. To push him, to get him to reveal his true colors, to manipulate until he exposed himself to the light of day. It should have been obvious to trap him. It should have been easy to do so. But such matters were never so simple. He hadn't expected to want it the way that he did. He hadn't expected to enjoy it the way that he did. He didn't hunger for it, didn't expect to cling to the blood caught in his teeth. He didn't expect himself to be so easily persuaded.

He didn't expect himself to fall in love.

Of course, fate didn't care about his inner turmoils. The two blue lines didn't care about how much it was bound to fuck up his life. That little cluster of cells rapidly growing inside of his body didn't care about his unmade plans.

It didn't register for a long moment. He stood staring at the two lines, trying his damned hardest to convince himself that it was just one. That he wasn't pregnant. That he wasn't going to have a baby. Like the man that he hated and the man that he loved hadn't given him this rare gift; this rare, horrible, wonderful gift. He tried to convince himself that none of this was happening, that he would go into heat any second now and he would call Hannibal and the alpha would service him through it, the way that he always did.

But the seconds ticked by, and the seconds turned to minutes, and minutes into hours, and hours into days, and days into weeks, and weeks into months, and months into years, and years into decades, and before he knew it, Will could have sworn that he'd been standing there for millennia. And still, the two lines stayed strong, unwavering and unmoving. Two lines. He was pregnant. And no matter how long he stood staring at the pregnancy test, nothing was going to change that.

Will let it clatter the floor as his stomach lurched. He immediately doubled over the sink, sweat beading at his brow as the contents of his stomach threatened to spill. He gripped the edges of his sink, fighting to find some steadiness, but it didn't ultimately stop his knees from buckling beneath him as he collapsed onto the floor, back pressed against the cabinet.

He was pregnant with Hannibal Lecter's baby. He was pregnant with the child of a monster. He was pregnant with the child of the man that he loved, and hated himself for loving.

He was pregnant. *Oh, god, he was pregnant.*

Will could remember the feeling he'd felt when he'd found out that he was pregnant the first time, when he was just a child himself. He remembered the crushing weight of terror, knowing that he wasn't ready for a baby, knowing that he wasn't ready to be a father. He remembered his tears streaming from his eyes as he realized that this baby could've been his saving grace. He remembered the wracked sobs as he begged his father to let him keep it, because it at least meant nine months without greasy men forcing themselves between his slick-soaked thighs. He remembered the way he'd protested and bawled as the doctor spread his legs wide and pressed his instruments of torture between his legs. He remembered feeling the life leaving his womb.

He could remember most vividly the way that it felt when his baby move for the first time. He had already began to form a sizable bump, especially in contrast to the rest of his slight frame. Nothing that couldn't be hidden by baggy t-shirts, but when he was alone in his room, laying on his side in nothing but his boxers, it was plainly evident. He had been sixteen weeks pregnant when he felt the baby kick inside of him for the first time, laying on his bed, just between waking and sleeping with a protective hand resting on his small bump. He felt the baby moving inside of him, a simple turn, only to be felt by him.

He'd broken down sobbing, already knowing the fate predestined for the child growing within him. He's cried for hours, cradling his stomach and hoping to feel the movement inside of him again. A kick, a jolt, anything.

And over the next two weeks, Will felt his child move again, each time stronger than the last. Over and over, every single day. When he was sitting in class and trying to hide his best kept secret, hen he was laying in bed at three in the morning with tears drying against his cheeks because he couldn't cry anymore. Whenever, wherever, he would feel that reassuring little shift, that little movement, that little kick.

The last time he felt them kicking was frantically, moving about inside of him, as the doctor pressed the clamp past his hole.

Will didn't even have the chance to make it to the toilet as he heaved all over the bathroom floor. He had been so young, so naive, yet already so in love with the baby that he had been forced to abort. He had been so in love with a child ripped from his womb, discarded like trash, taken from him against his will. Even as a child, Will had felt so deeply for the child of a man he didn't remember, a man who had taken him and raped him, a man who just so happened to be lucky enough to be the highest bidder. What would he feel for the child of the man that he loved?

The child of his alpha.

His alpha.

There was no denying it anymore. No matter what Hannibal had done, they were bound by this now. Hannibal was his alpha, and Will was his omega, and this was their chance. This was their chance at some semblance of normalcy. This was their chance at reviving something like a relationship beyond lies and deceit and pain and hurt and struggles for power. Perhaps there was still time. Perhaps they could still run. If for nothing more than the sake of their child.

The omega, chest full of lead, forced himself to sit up. He pulled his knees tight against his chest, trying to bring himself some form of comfort. He leaned back against the cabinet as he let out a sigh, a shuddered breath drawn from his lips. He clenched his eyes shut as he focused on breathing. *Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.*

The omega slowly let his hand drift down against his belly. He had a bit of a pudge there now, wasn't the scrawny kid that he used to be. Wasn't fat by any means, but well-fed, sure. That pudge would form into a bump in a matter of weeks, a matter of months. That bump would blossom and his belly would swell to accommodate the child growing inside of him. He would feel his child moving inside of him in a few months. Carry it to term as it grew and took form within his womb.

And in nine short months, he was going to give birth. He was going to go into labor and Hannibal would undoubtedly be the one to deliver the pup - god knew that he would never let anyone else do it. And Hannibal would cut the cord before bringing his crying child to his chest, allow it to feel the flesh of its father, to take comfort as its lips were brought to suckle from his chest. Will would see himself and Hannibal in the face of this child, this cunning, disastrous little thing still so innocent.

They would be fathers. Again.

Fathers, like they had been to Abigail, before she was taken from him.

Hannibal was a selfish man. Perhaps he would try to take this rare gift away, as he did with everyone else. He took Abigail, alienated him from everybody else, fostered codependency. But perhaps a child made with him, a child placed in his womb himself, a seed planted… Perhaps Hannibal could learn to love something other than Will. Perhaps he could see the beauty in the life they had created. He'd said it himself, after all. He had wanted to give it all back.

Perhaps that was what he was doing. Giving it all back.

They would bear children and they would be wonderful and cunning and terrible and the most terrifying force to be reckoned with on this earth. Hannibal had given this to him, perhaps purposely, or perhaps not. Either way, it was proven in two lines on a pregnancy test. Hannibal had presented him with this rare gift, and maybe he could want take it. Maybe he could want it.

Maybe he could be joyous in such careless mistakes. Maybe he could fall in love with a child growing within his womb, with a bump growing thick beneath his clothes as evidence of Hannibal's love. Maybe he could fall in love with the baby to be placed in his arms, to be cradled tight against his chest. Maybe he could fall in love with a child with unruly dark curls

and dark eyes running around at their feet on wobbling legs. Maybe he could fall in love with something less than ideal, something unexpected and something unplanned for. Maybe he could fall in love with the middle ground between what his life had been and what it was meant to be.

And for just a moment, he swore that he could feel it. Not in the form of kicks or jostles of movement, but there was a mere sense. A sort of presence within his womb, the first burgeonings of life as it grew within him. Cells multiplying and growing to form this wonderful, wretched little creature just beneath the flesh. A sort of tingling, a sort of shift in his awareness, another life awakening within his body. His hand rubbed softly over his clothes, gently caressing just over the presence in his womb.

Tears were drawn to his eyes, and he couldn't quite place their source. Perhaps the fear, or the joy, or just the pregnancy hormones. They fell quietly, softly, as his hand curled protectively over the place where their child lay growing. It was nothing more than a cluster of cells, unrecognizable as human, nothing more than an embryo that had attached to the lining of his uterus. And even still, Will decided that he was in love.

Will Graham was pregnant. Perhaps it was his curse. Or perhaps it was his saving grace.

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Will crept as silently as he could through the halls. Red pooled across the kitchen floor, seeping from beneath the door of the pantry. Jack, undoubtedly. Will kept his finger steady on the trigger, just in case, just in case. He would never be able to shoot Hannibal, but he did it just in case. Just in case what?

Seemed pointless, the gun in his hand. Hannibal could have done anything to him, and Will would still never reach to pull the trigger. Part of him cursed himself for such weaknesses, but he knew himself well. They may have not been able to live with each other, but it was sure as hell better than living without.

They were supposed to leave together. His mind had been changed a thousand times over, unsure of what way to go and what to do. He finally decided upon running with him, some part of him knowing that it was the only option all along. He would have told him about the baby then, once they were safe, far away from Jack and all the king's men. But he had decided what he wanted too late.

Instead, it had all fallen through. Hannibal was supposed to run. He was supposed to go, get away. But he hadn't. He had stayed to stand and fight, leaving wreckage and ruin in his wake with Alana half dead outside on the pavement and Jack bleeding out in the pantry.

Barely able to breathe, Will rounded the corner, gun raised and aimed as he caught sight of the shadows cast long across the floor. He half expected Hannibal to be standing there, waiting for him, but instead, there stood someone else. The crying girl with dark hair and the
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scarred neck, the crying girl standing on weak knees before him. The crying girl that he had thought dead, the crying girl that he had called his own daughter.

"Abigail," he breathed.

"I didn't know what else to do, so I just did what he told me," she whimpered.

There was anger unspeakable, and pain. To see the girl he had mourned standing before him, he felt the sting of betrayal. But in that moment, teary-eyed and broken, Will wanted nothing more than to reach out and pull her into his arms, hold her until the tears stopped. Hold her until the world stopped.

He couldn't remember if he had ever hugged her before, if he had ever really touched her. He didn't remember a lot of things. He couldn't remember if he had ever taken her into his arms, held her there, squeezed her tight until she felt safe again, until she was okay again. He wondered if he would ever have the chance after this.

He forced himself still, rather focusing on the word *'he.'* Hannibal Lecter had done this to her.

"Where is he?" Will breathed.

Abigail stayed silent, rather just breathing and staring, her eyes darting between him and the space behind him. Will could feel it in his chest and in the weight of the floorboards as it dawned on him. His heart sunk in his chest and he suddenly felt fear filling him. Fear and anger and love and need and everything else. The things that Hannibal did to him, the things that he made him feel… Will cursed him for it. Will loved him for it.

"You were supposed to leave," Will said as he turned to face him.

Hannibal stood bloodied and cold, like the devil himself. But Will wasn't afraid. Hannibal wouldn't hesitate to kill anyone else, but Will was different. Will had always been different. Will was Hannibal's omega, and the alpha wouldn't kill him. Couldn't kill him. He would smell it on him. Smell the pregnancy, the shift in scent, the shift in hormones. He wouldn't take this from him. They would make their escapes, disappear and live some happily ever after someday. They would find some twisted version of okay.

This saving grace inside of him was going to make it okay. Even if it didn't feel okay now, even if this felt like hell, even if he was terrified and conflicted and madly, infuriatingly in love… It would be alright again someday.

"We couldn't leave without you," Hannibal said as Will turned to face him, eyes meeting through the darkness. Hannibal's eyes were dark, almost black. Beautiful. Terrifying. He stood like Lucifer himself, bloodied and cold as heaven's fallen. Even standing in the midst of the King of Hell, Will would have knelt to him again and again. He could have been brought to his knees at a glance, and he would choose the man before him, over and over again.

Hannibal raised a tentative hand, pressed gently against the side of his face. A soft sigh escaped his lips as he leaned against his touch, praying that he would pull him closer, claim his lips and forgive him. Perhaps forgiveness could still be found in him, if for nothing more than the sake of sentiment.

It was the idea of forgiveness that distracted him from the glint of the blade.

He didn't let out a cry of anguish when it entered him. It was not a cry in physical pain - of course, he could still feel the pain in his body, in his abdomen, but that was hardly of importance. His immediate thought, seeing beyond the blinding pain as the blade cut into him, was the baby. The child that Hannibal was killing without knowing. Will's mistakes and Hannibal's ignorance was going to destroy the life that grew within him.

It was happening all over again. *Oh, god,* it was happening all over again.

Will could feel the life drain from his body, and wondered if his own life would follow suit. He could feel it quiet within him, in the same way it had before. More pain, more blood, but it felt the same way it had the first time, when his father had forced him into the abortion chair. His lip quivered as he stared up at his alpha, pleading, begging him to take it back, but there was nothing to be done. There was no stopping it. There was no changing it.

He let out a small cry as he cut deeper into him, dragging the blade roughly across his abdomen. Ironic. Cruel. Will wanted to cry out, tell him to stop, beg him to take it back, tell him what he was doing… But it was no use. Hannibal had made up his mind. The alpha was going to slaughter his omega.

It was the story of the lion who fell in love with the lamb. It would be forever in his nature to destroy the thing that he loved, to consume and devour, to let the blood run down his chin as the lamb lay limp between his jaws. No matter what love he felt, he would forever be forced to resist his very nature. And in his betrayal, his nature won him over, and the lion was left to sink his teeth in.

Still, Will pulled closer, falling hard into his embrace. He figured that any sane person would have pushed away, try their damned hardest to escape their attacker, but perhaps what he would be considered was no longer sane. He was losing blood, and losing it fast. Absently, he registered a gush of blood trickle down his legs, spilling from his hole and spilling onto the floor beneath him. And yet, even still, Will pulled closer. Closer and ever closer.

Hannibal pulled the knife from his body, pulling his arms tighter around him. Will could feel the life leaving his body, both his own and the life of his child, could feel it leaving him like sand through his fingertips. But the good doctor held him and brought him something like comfort. Comfort, love, pain, anger… That was what their relationship had always been. Disastrous and beautiful, and now it was coming to a head. Will thought himself a fool for believing that he could have anything different.

"Time did reverse. The teacup that I shattered did come together," Hannibal murmured.

Will barely registered his words, struggling to keep himself upright, struggling to keep his grip around his shoulders. The tears stung in his eyes as he felt the blood gush from his

wound, spilling onto the floor beneath them.

“A place was made for Abigail in your world.” Will vaguely registered the feeling of his fingers combing through his hair, dripping from the rain that poured outside.

Such betrayals, such sweet betrayals. Such bitter punishment. Hannibal had been foolish for thinking that they could find anything other than this. He had made a place for them, a place where they could disappear, where they could find refuge, where a home could be built for all of them. But their paradise lay in ruins, all burned down by one act of betrayal. “Do you understand?”

Will shook his head hard, eyes clenched shut in pain as he pulled closer to him, holding tight to him, cleaving to the man that he loved. Love of biblical proportions. The love of a man cleaving to his idea of his benevolent creator, despite the hellfire that rained from the skies. The love of a man foolish enough to cling to a wrathful god.

“A place was made for all of us,” Hannibal murmured, pain in his voice. Pain of loss, pain of heartbreak. He had gone to prepare a place for them, in some twisted view of paradise. He had made a home for them. And yet, Will had not wanted it. A cruel thing, such a cruel, wicked thing. He should have tossed him aside, should’ve thrown him to the ground and let him drown in his own blood. And yet, he held on, clinging to the man that he had loved. With tears brimming in his eyes, Hannibal pulled the omega back slowly, catching his eyes. “Together.”

Blood rose like a flood beneath him, spilled from the gash, from between his legs. Tears sprung from his eyes, dripping down, down, down, blood flowing with water. He wanted it now. He wanted to follow him to the edges of the earth, no matter the right and the wrong, no matter what the world might think of him, no matter their manmade murder and their manmade mercy. He chose his alpha, but it was too late. Too late, too late, too fucking late.

“I wanted to surprise you,” Hannibal said. He sucked in a sharp breath, struggling to hold some semblance of composure, despising his own weakness. “And you… You wanted to surprise me.”

Bitterness filled him as he laid his lover across the floor, let him lay there in his own blood and misery. Let him feel the pain that he had caused, let him ache and beg and feel the life leaving his lungs. He wanted Will Graham to feel even half of the pain that he had caused. He wanted his bittersweet vengeance.

Tears filled his eyes as Will scooted against the counter. He could remember happier times spent right here. Times when he’d come down dressed in nothing but Hannibal’s robe, coming downstairs after hours of vigorous heat sex, the fog subsiding for a few moments. Will could remember leaning over this countertop and watching him cook, some gorgeous, wonderful, beautiful glimpse at domesticity. Perhaps that had been something that they could have shared for the rest of their days if not for some foolish betrayals.

“I let you know me. See me,” Hannibal hissed, fighting back tears as Will writhed beneath him, clutching his stomach in an attempt to quell the bleeding. There was nothing that would stop the pain now, though. Instinct demanded that he help, that he protect his omega, but he

would not be dictated by the ringing in his ears. He wanted him to suffer. He wanted him to hurt in the same way. “I gave you a rare gift… But you didn’t want it.”

Will wrapped his arms harder around himself as the tears stained his cheeks, stinging where they dripped into his gash. They were weak, the both of them, aching at the consequence of their own transgression. Will wanted to fix it, wanted this to be over, wanted this to have played out differently. If only. If only, if only, if only.

“Didn’t I?” he squeaked, choking back sobs.

“You would deny me my life,” Hannibal said, voice ringing with accusation.

“No. No, no,” Will protested, shaking his head hard as he struggled to hold himself together. “Not your life.”

“My freedom, then,” he hissed, the thought almost worse than death. Will let out ragged breaths, eyes clamped shut tightly, lip quivering. “You would take that from me. Confine me to a prison cell.” He spoke it like he was reminding himself why he had done this, why he was doing all of this. What other reason would he strip himself of the man that he had loved? Life in confinement, life locked away, it was almost worse than the idea of death. Kept alive, away from the world...

Will’s lip quivered, struggling back a sob as he clutched his stomach, trying to keep from bleeding out, but there was nothing that he was going to stop the blood gushing from his hole as his body rejected the life that had been growing inside of him.

“Do you believe you could change me? The way I’ve changed you?” Hannibal asked.

Will’s eyes found Hannibal’s, trapped somewhere between brokenhearted and defiant as he clutched at his stomach. Will had witnessed the changes in Hannibal, just as he’d witnessed the changes in himself. Two men damned to walk the earth alone, gods among men until they found each other. To walk your whole life alone, then to discover companionship in another… They had both been changed by it.

“I already did.”

Hannibal’s lip quivered for a moment as he stared down at him. He knew that he was right, even if he would never admit it. Will Graham had made him weak, had made him vulnerable. Will Graham had exposed him to things he had never felt before, things that he had not thought himself capable of feeling.

Will made him human.

Will curled in tighter on himself, trying to keep himself from falling to pieces right then and there. He was losing blood fast. He wouldn’t be able to stay conscious much longer, and after that, he wondered if his eyes would ever open again, or if he would be confined to eternal darkness. He wondered if he would ever see the sun again, or if he even wanted to. After all of the pain that he had been through… It felt like it was too much for one lifetime. Maybe it was time for this one to end.

“Fate and circumstance have returned us to this moment… When the teacup shatters,” Hannibal murmured, feeling himself deflate. Maybe they would come together again one day, whether it be in this life or the next. Maybe the teacup would find a way to gather itself again, and they would somehow find a way to make it work, to have something like domesticity, or some twisted version of it. But until then, they would break apart again and again, and Hannibal wondered if either of them could withstand it.

“I forgive you, Will,” Hannibal breathed. He did. Will Graham would undoubtedly destroy him in the end, and he would destroy him in turn. Mutual destruction, a toxic bond that would lead nowhere. His voice broke as he opened his mouth to speak again, eyes watering, his family destroyed at his own hand. “Will you forgive me?”

“Oh, don’t,” Will begged, head shaking hard. He was going to take everything from him. The life of his child, and now Abigail, and then his own life. “D-don’t. No, don’t.” Pleads rung against the walls, begging as Hannibal held out a hand toward the girl that he had called his own, beckoning her toward him.

Will had felt the weight of her death already, a weight that Hannibal thrust upon him. That weight dissipated when he stepped into that very room to find her standing there, alive and well. And now Hannibal was taking her from him all over again. The girl he had called family, the girl he had loved as his own child. And now he would be stripped of her, punishments for unforgivable actions. It was retribution for the sins of man placed upon one innocent soul, a story torn from the pages of the Old Testament.

“Abigail, come to me,” Hannibal instructed softly.

She obeyed, taking his hand as he pulled her against his chest. Sorrow filled him as he brought the knife to her throat, feeling her tremble and sob beneath his touch. Pain wracked against his chest - this was not what he had wanted, but what necessity had demanded. Deeds such as Will’s could not go unpunished, certainly, even if they both suffered for it.

Will let out a scream, screams comparable to those of the tortured souls in the pits of hell. He sobbed as the alpha split open her neck, this time lethal, no one there to save her this time. Guilt flooded over him, the weight of the world slamming down on his shoulders, knowing that he had lost two children at the hand of the man who had given them to him. The price of falling in love with… What? God? The devil?

Hannibal let her fall to the floor, gasps coming out like screams as she struggled for breath, clutching at her neck as the blood came gushing. Will let out a sob, crying out as he struggled to reach her side. There was some instinct to attempt to save her, to hold her life in his hands and bring her back to safety, at least until the ambulance arrived. But he was no doctor, and his hands no longer retained the strength to keep her from bleeding out and choking on her own blood. He would try, though, until he sputtered and choked on his own blood and drowned beneath the waves. If she were to die, she would not die alone.

The alpha leaned over in front of him, capturing his eyes, drawing in closer to the omega when he caught a whiff of his scent. How he had missed it before, he wasn’t sure, but he suddenly felt all the blood drain from his face. His scent was different than it normally was, even underneath the scent of blood, Hannibal could smell it. It was sweeter, or it had been.

Now it was being smothered, drowned out underneath the waves of the metallic ocean of his own design.

Will was pregnant.

Or had been.

He felt sick. This hadn't been his plan. He hadn't meant to do this. This was the child that he had given Will Graham, the child that they had made together… And Hannibal had killed it. The child that they had created, the child that had been growing within Will's body... Their child was dead because of him.

He felt sick.

This hadn't been his intention. He had fantasized about this one day, of giving Will a child, a litter, even. He had dreamt of watching his omega blossom with his child, watching the life that they had created together grow inside of him. He had dreamt of bringing forth this wonderful, cunning, awful, brilliant, terrible, perfect little thing running around at his feet, the two of them building something like a family together… And now he had killed it.

It wasn't until that moment that he felt the weight of what he had done.

It all came over him in a heap of regret as the life that they could've had flashed before his eyes. The three - no, four - of them running away together, building a new life for themselves, away from Jack Crawford and all the king's men, away from the warriors who thought that they knew right from wrong, even if right and wrong were nothing more than man-made concepts.

There was so much that he could have done that he had thrown away with the slice of a blade. Holding the man that he loved as he slept in his arms, outside of heat and rut, being left with peaceful domesticity. Feeling his son or daughter kicking inside of Will's tummy, moving just beneath the surface. Standing at the shore as he watched Will teach Abigail to fish. Teaching Abigail, and one day the child that he and Will had made together, the intricacies of taking life, of becoming gods among men. Because that was what they were, weren't they? Giving and taking life as they chose, far above sheep.

They could have all been gods. They could have ruled from afar, tucked away in a home they'd made for themselves, kings and queens of their own design. They could have had so much more.

But Will had taken that from them.

He had to be punished. Such actions could not go without retribution, could not be forgiven without sacrifice. Like the God of the Bible, he would demand the sins be atoned for in bloodshed and death, a holy sacrifice unto him. He could not simply allow this betrayal without demanding penance.

And yet, there was something so incredibly sick that settled in his chest. Some regret, some self-hatred. Could he not have shown mercy for the sake of his own child? Was mercy truly

so far outside of his grasp that he could have not extended it for only a moment? Was there no other atonement that could have been offered unto him for his crimes? Were his lies truly worthy of the blade pressed through the flesh? Was a soft betrayal and a warning truly worthy of all this death?

Perhaps they could have made a life for themselves in spite of the betrayal. Perhaps they could have found reconciliation and domesticity in the child that had grown inside of Will's womb. Perhaps they could have found something akin to peace, perhaps they could have still found a way to disappear, away from all the king's horses and all the king's men. Perhaps a home could have been salvaged from the ashes even still.

Perhaps none of that mattered now. He had succumbed to animalistic instincts, vicious and starving for blood, opting for the blade rather than anything more humane. He had drowned any potential for a life together beneath the waves of red. Murder and mercy were man-made concepts, sure, but there was no denial of what Hannibal had done. He had taken the lives of those he loved most, and now he would have to deal with the consequences.

Alone.

Hannibal felt a tear slip from his eye, off of his nose and into the floor, disappearing into the sea of blood that had formed at his feet. His chest burned with the weight of what he had done, tears drawn to his eyes as they found his omega, clinging desperately to his consciousness. His mouth moved to open, something akin to compassion quiet in his voice.

"You can make it all go away," Hannibal whispered in attempts of soothing him, of leading him quietly into the dark. "Put your head back. Close your eyes. Wade into the quiet of the stream."

Chapter End Notes

will strip for comments.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will woke alone to the smell of antiseptic and the flickering of fluorescent lighting. *Alone.*

He could feel the crushing weight of his own loneliness slam against his chest, pinning him to the bed. Hannibal was gone, vanished, a million miles away by now. He was uncertain as to whether Abigail was dead or alive, if she had managed to survive the night or if she had choked on her own blood. But he could feel the emptiness in his womb, knew that the child that had been growing inside of him was long dead now. He could feel it.

Will felt tears welling up in his eyes, his heart weighing heavily in his chest. His eyes watering, his lip quivering, he struggled to hold back the tears. Dead and gone. Everyone he loved was dead or gone.

He slowly reached up to rest a hand over the place where Hannibal had exacted his justice. The bandages wrapped tightly around him, thick over his stomach. The baby that had been growing inside of his womb was replaced with a jagged scar, stretching across his abdomen, surely a permanent reminder of that night. A permanent reminder of the life that had been lost. A reminder etched into the flesh of everything that he had sacrificed.

And so another ghost was added to the already haunted bone arena of his skull, rattling around until they would surely drive him mad. The drag of Hannibal's knife as his blood and guts spilled onto the floor beneath him. The blade slitting across Abigail's throat, the blood trickling down his thighs as his body rejected the pregnancy. The anguish in Hannibal's eyes as his voice guided him into the quiet of the stream. Now another ghost to haunt him under the veil of night. His own cries of protest and Abigail's screeching gasps for breath would echo through his ears right alongside the faint kicks of the first child that had been murdered while still inside of him, and the shrieks and begs of a twelve year old boy being brutally raped by men that he didn't know. Just more fuel for his nightmares, he supposed.

There was no one there for him, no one to stand by him. Will Graham was completely and utterly alone, just as he had been when this had all started. He had spent his life alone, and he supposed his life would end in much the same way. Hannibal had been the first to penetrate the walls that he had erected, the first to touch him, the first flesh to find his. Hannibal had torn through his armor, but his knife had cut flesh.

He wanted to sob, wanted to scream, wanted to curse himself for getting too close, but instead the tears came in a silent, steady stream. Had he been stronger, he would've screamed, shouted, cried out to the heavens and cursed whatever god let this happen. But he was weak. He was a coward, not wanting to tear his stitches. He should've said to hell with the stitches, to hell with his well-being, but he wasn't sure that he could survive any more pain.

A pretty nurse with dark, tightly-wound curls and pretty brown eyes stepped inside, offering him a small, weak smile. “Oh, you’re awake. Good morning, Mr. Graham,” she greeted quietly, stepping closer to the bed. She bore a thick Cajun accent, not unlike his own when he wasn’t thinking about it. He’d adopted something of a more neutral accent over the years, wanting to destroy any part of him that still belonged to Louisiana. But sometimes, typically in the throes of passion, in bed with his alpha, too caught up in the heat of the moment to care, it would slip out again.

“Th-” Will tried to croak out, voice catching in his throat when he felt the burn. His throat was on fucking fire.

“Shh, shh, here,” she offered, quickly pouring him a small glass of water and raising it to his lips. He could hardly move, his limbs full of lead, heavy and weak, almost like dead weight. He desperately wished for the strength that he’d once had, the independence, freedom to move about the world in the way that he chose. Before Hannibal Lecter ever came into his life. When he was able to silence the ghosts in the back of his head, when there was no one but him and his dogs to care about… He missed his freedom.

“Better?” she inquired softly as Will gulped down the water.

He nodded slightly, reaching up slowly and swiping away his tears in some attempt to regain composure. Composure, strength, dignity, anything. But he had been stripped of all of it over and over again. When he went into heat, when he found out that he was pregnant, when Hannibal’s blade had sunk into his stomach… Hannibal had stripped him of all his composure and strength, leaving him the weak, needy omega that he had always been.

Hannibal had stripped him of everything. And yet, somehow, he wasn’t sure that he regretted any of it.

Hannibal had reached past his armor, beyond his walls, and made him feel things, emotions that he had forgotten were even there. He’d shattered him in a million different ways and made him happy to be broken. He’d left him terrified only to come to his rescue, the arsonist playing fireman, and Will Graham had loved every single second of it, even if it left him alone in a hospital bed.

He slowly reached down and pressed his hand against the bandages, where his baby had been, where his child had once been growing inside of him. He bit back tears, knowing exactly what the nurse was going to say before he even asked. He could already feel the emptiness in his womb, had felt the life of his child leave his body as he collapsed to the floor in a puddle of his own blood. He could remember the blood and the clots passing as his body rejected the pregnancy in the fight for its own life. His pup was gone and he was alone. Still, he needed to hear it.

“The baby,” he squeaked out.

He watched as the nurse seemed to deflate entirely, a look of sympathy - or was that pity? - in her eyes. She put a hand on his shoulder in an attempt to offer some consolation, though it helped nothing. He knew that look. Whatever dying ember of hope had remained tucked

between the splintered pieces of his broken heart faded to black as he felt everything inside of him fizzle out, tears threatening to spill over again. He'd lost everything. He had nothing left.

"I'm so sorry. I'd hoped that you hadn't known yet… It was so early on, the pups were so tiny…" she tried to console. "You barely made it out alive, Mr. Graham. We had a hell of a time saving you, so saving the pups… It wasn't… It just wasn't possible."

Will felt what remained of his fractured, splintered, broken heart shatter and return to nothing but dust, leaving him empty. *Pups.* With an 's.' She had said *pups.*

"Pups?" he breathed, lip quivering.

Her eyes went wide at the realization that he had only been aware of the presence of one. He had known that there was life growing inside of him, known that he was pregnant, but he hadn't known that he'd been pregnant with more than one. Somehow, the blow struck him even deeper, if that was even possible, the knife cutting all the way through him now, leaving him severed, broken, busted, torn apart at the seams.

"Oh. I… I thought you… You were pregnant with twins, Mr. Graham," she murmured.

Everything pulled apart within him. His bones ached and every inch of him burned, the pain in his chest deepening, everything else paling in comparison as the tears flowed freely. He let out a ragged sob, unable to contain it anymore, unable to hold himself together, unable to hold back the flood. His composure was gone, his family was gone, his alpha was gone… Everything was gone and Will Graham was alone.

Just before the pain became too much and he fell back into the darkness, Will let out a scream like hell.

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Hannibal didn't like the piano.

That wasn't quite right, of course. He liked the piano well enough, sure, but the strike of the keys was not nearly as satisfying as that of the harpsichord. He had always preferred the sound of the harpsichord, ever since he was a boy. He looked back fondly upon the days of his youth, fingers hardly long enough to reach the keys, sitting in his father's lap as he taught him simple tunes to ring off of stone walls. Days before hell came upon his family. Days before the bad men took his sister away. Days before the fire forged the beast that he had become.

The harpsichord had always called his attention, more than the piano ever did. More alive, the music arriving like experience, sudden and entire. The piano reserved the quality of a memory. Colder, more gray, more like the quality of a rainy day, clouds cast overhead. But the piano was all he had, and he would take whatever he could get.
~~~~

He let his fingers strike the keys in an old melody that reminded him of better days. He remained stuck on one memory in particular. It had rained all that day, but they had been warm beneath a fortress of pillows and sheets. Will Graham had sat tucked between his legs at the edge of their shared bed, intertwined in ways less violent than blood or sex.

Hannibal hadn't worn anything but his sheets, and Will had shrugged on one of Hannibal's white button downs, hanging loosely from his frame. His heat had been rapidly coming to a close, much to the dismay of the alpha, and Will had gotten to a point where he would only devolve into his need a few more times before they would be able to return to the world outside of their four walls.

They had found the energy to scoot down, a tangle of limbs as the omega poked at Hannibal's theremin, struggling to find a tune. It was a difficult instrument to play, but Hannibal had taken his hands and taught them to strike a melody. They had sat playing this one over and over until Will began to grow fussy, needing the alpha's knot again.

Happier memories. Better ones.

It would have been during that heat that Will would have conceived, a realization that quickly made the entire memory turn bittersweet, stinging to the touch.

They had talked of breeding during the throes of their heat and rut, in their desperation and pleasure, but had never spoken of it seriously. The details of their relationship had been unclear, without labels or names for what they felt, and what they wanted out of their connection had never been made clear. Pups, domesticity, a life together… Hannibal had never thought to ask, assuming that it would just come about, but…

It had been a mistake. One mistake. He had known that it would be a risk, had known that it would most likely come about on its own eventually, but he had thought that they would be prepared for it when it did happen. Will wasn't using protection, and while heat suppressants could cause infertility for up to a year after stopping it, Hannibal had known that they should have been more careful. But the risk, the thrill of it all, the sincerity that he felt deep within him when his rut fogged his mind and he began to talk about breeding… He hadn't wanted to lose that. He had been selfish.

And one mistake led to another.

Taking Will Graham's child away from him had been the plan all along anyways, when he had taken Abigail's life. He had loved Abigail like his own, but her death had been necessity. But the child that they had conceived together… That had been unintentional. That had lingered among his deepest regrets.

He struck the keys of the piano, feeling the panging of memories rattling in his bones as the sound echoed through the marble hallways of his temporary home. He found himself spending more time in his memory palace than in the real world, sucked back into the corners of his mind, casting light on rooms that he hadn't visited in years.

He had come back to the streets of Florence, reminding him of the place where the boy that he'd been had become the man he was now. How he had changed since walking these streets.

He had become a stone, made of iron and metal, finding his joy in the finer things in life rather than in people. He had vowed to never let anyone hurt him again, not after Mischa. He hadn't let anyone so close.

And then Will Graham came along.

Will Graham, with averted eyes and coffee on his breath and insurmountable amounts of snark in an attempt to protect himself… Hannibal had been intrigued from day one.

He had let Will get close, let him see what dangerous secrets lurked beneath the surface. He let him in, let him get beneath his skin, and now he was suffering the consequences for it. He had the death of his children, of Abigail and the unborn child that had been growing inside of Will's womb, on his hands, his hands stained a deeper shade of red now. He had so much blood on his hands after all of the lives that he had taken, and he had never regretted a single one until now.

Hannibal could still feel Will in his fingertips, like the shape of him, the feeling of him ingrained in his fingerprints. His fingers had touched every inch of Will's body, memorized every freckle and crease and scar and perfect imperfection. Those memories were already beginning to blur, slipping into black and white rather than full, unadulterated color, shades of gray taking the joy from his memories. The only color that he could remember now was red, blood washing over him…

And yet, Will Graham's voice still echoed in his ears.

"It sounds like I'm killing it," Will chuckled, laughing for perhaps the first time since they had resumed his therapy, rekindled whatever it was that they had. Hannibal smiled, pressing his nose into the crook of his neck, pressing just against his mating gland. He'd bite down there one day, he promised himself, but not yet, not now.

Will's fingers moved rigidly, cringing each time the theremin struck a note that didn't quite play right against his eardrums. Hannibal hadn't expected him to know how to play. He had always been one for the obscure, so there was no shock in hearing that Will had never even heard of such an instrument. He would teach the omega to play, teach him to control it, but until then, he was content watching Will struggle, chuckling as he explored its intricacies with the curiosity of a child.

"You are killing it," Hannibal teased, wrapping his arms tighter around Will's waist, holding him tightly against his chest. "Don't kill it."

Will laughed, his laugh like music, far preferable over the sound that the theremin was making. Hannibal nuzzled closer to him, propping his chin on the omega's shoulder, watching his hand moving as he played, if it could even be considered playing.

"The theremin is an instrument that can create exquisite music without ever needing to be touched. But it requires the rare gift of perfect pitch to be played properly," Hannibal explained quietly, reaching up and curling hand around Will's, moving his hand lightly, picking a melody from thin air, the sound ringing through the room, wrapping around them as it filled the air.

“I dreamed a dream in time gone by…
When hope was high and life worth living…
I dreamed that love would never die...
I dreamed that god would be forgiving…”

Hannibal rose from the bench, downing what was left of the wine he had poured himself before sitting down to play. That was enough piano for the day.

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Hannibal would have carried him a million miles just to tuck him back into bed, and in his bones, it felt as though he had. He’d walked through the night, along back alleyways and through fields, down long deserted stretches of highway, omega tucked tightly against his chest. He pulled clean clothes onto Will’s body, cleaning him off as best as he could before laying him across flannel sheets. He hadn’t stirred, hadn’t woken, hadn’t budged.

Gently, gingerly, he laid him on the bed, pulling the blankets over his shoulders and tucking him in tightly. He looked at peace for once in his life, something that Hannibal seldom saw from Will. Normally, his sleep was interrupted by fits and nightmares, rarely ever getting through the night without a whimper or terror. These fits often could be abated by Hannibal’s tight embrace, holding him still, and he supposed that this was why he slept so soundly now. The paralytic had worn off hours ago, and now he simply lay still.

He remembered the first time that he ever saw him so at ease. They had been knotted that first time, tied together, the first time that Will had ever willingly taken a knot, rather than having it forced inside of him. Hannibal had stayed over top of him, arms clasped tightly around him, squeezing him tight against his chest and vowing to never let him go again. Will had been so afraid that first time, and seldom went through a heat where he didn’t have a moment of fear, of panic, when the memories would come back to him and knock the wind from him, even still.

But as they lay knotted, Will had begun to purr, drifting off to sleep with a small smile playing against his lips. So content to just lay there and allow his alpha’s seed to take root, so content to allow Hannibal to console and comfort. That was the first time that Hannibal had ever seen himself let every wall and every shield fall around him and shatter to pieces.

So much had changed since then.

The alpha pushed a stray curl away from his face, leaning down to press a small kiss against his forehead - what he expected may be his last. It was doubtful that their teacup would ever come together again, that *they* would ever come together again, not after all of this, not after all that they had done. But Hannibal could wish, could dream, could remember better days, happier days, before this all went to hell. Before the world began to crumble and burn around them.
~~~~

He straightened himself out, straightening his coat and stretching his aching, stiff limbs. Chiyoh was outside, waiting for him to face her for the first time in years. He would have to face her eventually, and better to do it now. But as he turned to face the door, a hand reached out to tug at his wrist, drawing his attention back toward the bed. It wasn't forceful, just enough to draw his attention. He turned and looked down toward him, the blue-eyed omega looking up at him sleepily, like he was just barely awake, but alert enough.

"Alpha," he murmured.

Hannibal smiled softly. He hadn't been called that in nearly a year now, not since Will's last heat. He never called him that outside of heat, never muttered that word unless he was under the haze of sex and need. But now here he was, whispering it, claiming the alpha as his own, like nothing had happened, like they still had a *chance*...

"Hello, Will," Hannibal said, sinking to the floor in front of him, kneeling in front of the bed, taking the omega's hand in his own. He pressed a kiss against Will's knuckles, savoring the way that it felt when he pressed back against him, leaning into his touches. He knew that this might not happen again, knowing better than to hold expectation once he fully came about himself again. Once Will was fully awake, walls would be erected and barriers set.

Will smiled. His head was cloudy, too cloudy to remember all that had happened to him, the betrayal and the pain that he had suffered through. All that came to mind was his alpha, and how badly he had missed him, how desperately he had ached for him for so long. No matter how much he tried to deny it, he had missed Hannibal more than anything, mourning the loss of him almost as much as he had mourned the loss of his children.

He had suffered through six heats without his alpha. They didn't start again right away, but when they did, they were unbearable, violent reminders of all that he had lost. The hollow ache that ripped through him with every heat was no longer purely physical, no longer a biological need to take a knot and procreate. Now that hollowness crept into his chest, into everything, reminding him of just how alone he was.

Had he not lost them, had Hannibal's blade not ripped them from his body, he would have given birth to his pups around this time. He should've had two pups in his arms, keeping the two of them busy, Hannibal and Will raising their children together. But instead, he was forced to suffer heat after heat on his own, forced to deal with the aftermath of his loss and devastation.

But not anymore. Hannibal was here, lips pressed against his knuckles, touching him, holding him, *here.*

"I have something that I need to tell you. I didn't tell you before, but I need to tell you. It's important," Will whispered, words coming out somewhat slurred and childish, still drunk on sleep. Once he came back to himself, he would never open up like this, never come apart like this, never let Hannibal get so close. But for the first time since that night, they were raw, open with each other, quiet in their vulnerability to one another. This was how it was always supposed to be. Part of him wondered if he would ever have the honor to be so devastated again.

“What is it, William?” he asked softly.

Will, with shaking, weak hands, took Hannibal’s in his and guided it toward his body. He guided Hannibal’s hand beneath his shirt, feeling the alpha’s warm hands against his bare skin. It was cold inside of his home, even beneath the blankets and his clothes, but Hannibal’s hands were warm. Warm and soft and calloused and gentle all at once. He remembered the way that those same hands had touched him, cradled him. The way that they felt when they moved insistently inside of him, the way that they felt when they cradled him after sex, the way that they felt when they brushed against his face. The way that they felt when they left him to bleed out on the floor.

The omega pressed his hand against his belly, letting him feel the jagged scar that had formed there. Letting him feel the place where Will’s hands had drifted over and over again these past few months, a constant reminder of what had grown there, and what he had lost.

The past months had been hell, trying to recover from all that had happened, trying to rebuild his life, trying to recover after having lost everything. Days spent mourning, days spent in agony. It had taken months for the wound to heal, repeated stints in the hospital from infection and torn stitches. His own fault, his own recklessness. The omega was prone to find himself in fits of pain and anger and tearing away at his stitches, some physical representation of the pain that he felt within.

Hannibal’s hands, though, were gentle against his flesh. Will’s own hands were synonymous with the sting and burn of reopened wounds, blood oozing over his fingers, nails biting against skin, slowly killing himself with the loss that he felt. But Hannibal touched him gently, gingerly, almost like he was afraid that he might break. But he was done breaking. Hannibal, despite all of the pain that he had caused… His hands were healing, mending what had been broken, even if he was the one who destroyed what had once been.

“I was pregnant. When you stabbed me,” Will confessed quietly.

Hannibal felt the tears stinging in his eyes when the words came out. He’d known all this time, but it hadn’t settled with him until that moment, with his palm pressed flat against his omega’s belly. His lip quivered, trembling as he squeezed tightly to Will’s hand. The question that had haunted him all these months was whether or not Will had even known. He had hoped not, had hoped that the omega would be spared the death of his child, but he supposed not.

“I know,” Hannibal said.

“Twins, too. That’s what the doctor said. I was gonna have twins. I was gonna be a good omega for you Hannibal, just like you always said. Like we always talked about when I was in heat. I was gonna be a good omega for you. I was gonna give you twins, and we would’ve had Abigail, and we could’ve run away, but… Now...” Will rambled, nearly drunkenly, nearly falling back into his sleep as he spoke, barely able to think straight as he rambled on and on about what he had lost, tears beginning to sting his eyes, dripping down his nose. He sniffled. “I’m sorry.”

Hannibal felt sick.

He had destroyed everything that could have been. He had allowed for everything that he had longed for to be drowned in an ocean of blood, stripped himself of everything worth loving for the sake of filthy pride. It was infatuation with his own filthy pride that drew him to destroy all that he had loved, only to be drawn back to regret by the quiet tears of his omega. His shoulders hung heavy as his eyes turned away, the weight of his own wrongdoing slamming against his chest in senseless beating, leaving him to lay crippled and barely breathing against the floorboards.

He had tried so hard to convince himself that it was necessary. That there was simply no way around it, that Will needed to be punished for his betrayal. That he couldn't let himself regret it, or let feelings get in the way of what had to be done. That he'd never regretted a kill, and that this one should be no different. That it was worth it.

It wasn't worth it.

"I'm sorry, Will," he whispered, whimpering like a mewling child, weakness taking him, smothering him. He clung to the sheets as the tears began to fall, unable to keep himself together, unable to keep himself composed. He was a broken man, vulnerable, raw, repentant like the sinner begging for forgiveness. "I wish I could give them back to you. I wish that I could take it back, I wish that I could take it all back."

Will, lip quivering, hands trembling, reached up and pushed his fingers through his alpha's silvery hair in some attempts at consolation. After all of these months, scabs had formed, but the news was still raw for Hannibal. It still hurt, still stung as though it had happened yesterday.

"I wish that you could too," he said. "I wish we could go back to the start. I wish we could have..."

His voice trailed in remembering the place that Hannibal had created for the two of them, the place that he had rejected.

Will moved away slightly, patting the bed next to him. He didn't want to be so far away from him anymore. He wanted to feel his body pressed up against him, every inch of skin pressed against one another, open and vulnerable and entire again. He wanted to feel his arms wrapped around him, legs tangled through his, conjoined again, impossible to find where one of them ended and the other began. He just wanted to hold him one last time, knowing that come morning, there would be no more for them. The teacup was broken, and it would never come together again. But god, he wished it would.

"Lay with me," Will whispered.

Hannibal, unable to deny him anything, climbed onto the bed next to him, pulling the omega tight against his chest. Their clothes were rumpled and disarray, rolled up and positioned awkwardly, so that Hannibal could feel the pink, jagged scar raised across Will's abdomen pressed against his own. He held tighter, clinging to him as though it were the end of the world, scar burning a memory into his flesh as Hannibal tucked Will's head beneath his chin, cheek pressed against his chest.

Will slowly came to his own senses, taking in full the weight of all that had happened. Hannibal would ask him to run with him, to chase him, follow him across the world. Would ask him, or expect him to. He wouldn't, though. This would be his closure. This would be their last. After this, Hannibal would have no choice but to run, to flee, to leave the omega behind. And there was no strength left in Will to chase after him this time. Hannibal would run and Will would stay and there would be no more of this. Their conjoinment would be torn, broken, severed, and Will was unsure that either of them would be able to survive it.

Will would become a man made of flesh hiding beneath a suit made of titanium, no one to break through and touch him ever again. His stone walls would gather themselves together again, and Will's flesh, hot to the touch when he was with Hannibal Lecter, would grow cold. Hannibal would become the man of stone again. He was a man made of stone and mineral, and there would be no one to ever make him question if maybe he could be human again. They would eventually find ways to become what they had been before, as if they had never tasted something like this. Some heaven like this. Some hell like this.

But they would always miss it. They would look back and remember what they felt from a distance, men long grown numb remembering what it felt like to be alive. Gods among men, to be born and to die alone, forever longing for the days when they'd had an equal. They would always have scars from each other, some more physical than others. They would never fully recover from each other. It was never really going to be okay. But as he laid tightly wrapped in Hannibal's embrace, freshly fallen snow glinting in the cloudy gray glow of morning, he desperately wanted to believe that it would be.

"Make me believe that it's going to be okay," Will whispered.

Hannibal looked down at his omega, feeling the tears begin to well up already. He felt weak, vulnerable, flesh, human, and he both loved and despised the feeling of it. Slowly, the doctor pulled himself over top of Will, laying him flat on his back beneath him. He captured the stare of those gorgeous blue eyes, looking deep into them and seeing a reflection of his own soul, the two of them so identically different… Mirror images.

"Let me make love to you. Just once more," Hannibal murmured, his voice coming out like a beg. Will owed him nothing of the sort, but oh, he hoped that he would say yes.

Will nodded slowly, eyes pleading as Hannibal's hands grazed down his sides. He sighed as the alpha slipping the flannel shirt over his head, leaving him bare from the waist up. He hated taking it off, ashamed of the jagged scar left there, a constant reminder of the effect that Hannibal had on him. Though, he supposed, Hannibal had his own scars left in much the same way. Less personal, less intimate, but the long gashes across each wrist would leave a permanent mark of what they had done to each other.

Hannibal's hands moved over the omega gently, just ghosting over his flesh as he pressed a small kiss against his neck, where his mating gland lay. He had promised himself years ago that he would mark him one day, claim him, take him for his own, but he doubted that would ever happen now. He kissed down his collarbone, over his chest, down over the scar that lay across him. Tears began to flow silently as he kissed across the expanse of his abdomen.

The only marks that should have been there were stretch marks as he grew heavy and full with his children. But instead of the life that they had created between them, he was left with nothing but a jagged scar, pink and thick and spreading across the expanse of his abdomen. Had Hannibal been a more selfless man, he and Will could have salvaged something, some life together, if for nothing other than the sake of their children. Will should have spent the past eight months in the doctor's care, belly growing to accommodate for their children. Hannibal should have spent time worshipping every inch of him rather than running away, hiding among old streets. But there were things that couldn't be taken back, mistakes that couldn't be undone, scars that would never fade from memory.

He felt the guilt rising in his chest as he kissed at his scar, salty tears spilling onto Will's skin. The children that had grown within him should have been free of the sins of the father, should never have suffered the consequences for Will's betrayals. And yet, they had paid the ultimate sacrifice, the lamb clamped between the jaws of the lion despite its professed love, the man hung on the cross to pay for the sins of mankind. How cruel, how senseless.

Gently, gently, slowly, slowly, Hannibal moved down, fingers dipping below the waistband of his boxers and flannel pajama bottoms, tugging them off and tossing them aside, leaving the omega bare beneath him. He remembered the first time that he had undressed Will Graham, tugging off his shoes and socks and slick-soaked jeans, unable to take the time that he had wanted with him due to the need that had been building up in him. But now, they had nothing but time.

The alpha pressed a small kiss against the omega's cock, drawing a shuddered sigh from Will's lips. Slowly, he took his flaccid length in his mouth, suckling lightly at the glans, savoring the feeling of him hardening on his tongue. He savored the moans ringing quietly through the room, savored the feeling of his hole growing slick against probing fingers.

Beautiful.

Every time before this had been under the guise of heat and need. There had been no time to watch, to savor, to take in every little gasp and moan drawn from Will's throat. There had never been time for teasing and foreplay, never time to truly appreciate what was laid out before him. What remorse that his first chance to savor him would also be his last.

"Mmm, Hannibal…" Will whispered. He hadn't so much as touched himself since that night, having no desire, aside from during his heat, when he was unable to help himself. In addition to the flood of emotion that claimed his chest and threatened to drown him, Will knew that he wasn't going to last long. "Fuck, Han, so good."

Hannibal smiled to himself, taking the omega's cock deeper into his mouth as he pressed his index finger against his rim, gently circling with one finger, rewarded with a pulse of slick. Hannibal could have lived off of Will's words of praise, and the way that his body reacted to his touch and stimulation. The omega's fingers found their way through Hannibal's silvery hair, tugging lightly as Hannibal pressed two fingers past his rim, gently testing the waters.

Will bucked into his touch as Hannibal pressed his fingers up against his prostate, the pleasure wracking through him as he massaged insistently at that nub tucked away inside of

him. His breath became uneven as he struggled to stifle quiet moans, though Hannibal seemed to like the noises that he was making.

"Mylimasis…" Hannibal breathed, pulling his lips away from the omega's leaking cock as he scissored him open, opening the boy's body up to him, preparing him to take his length for the first time in nearly a year. Judging by how tight his body squeezed around him, he'd not taken much of anything in that time frame, aside from perhaps fingers in the throes of his heat. Hannibal could understand. Nothing could satisfy like the sex between alpha and omega, those born and destined to be together.

"Are you ready?" he asked, pulling dripping fingers from the omega's damp hole, wiping them on the sheets beneath him. "You haven't been opened in months, I don't want to hurt you."

Will nodded with eyes closed. He wanted it, wanted to take his knot. He wanted to feel his length moving inside of him, the two of them conjoined intertwined in body and soul.

Will savored the slick feeling of Hannibal's weeping cockhead rubbing against his rim just a moment before pushing in. The omega let out a gasp, blue eyes flying open as he slipped inside, leaving him full to bursting. He'd almost forgotten what this felt like. He rarely remembered too much from his heat, allowed nothing more than mere glimpses, never quite able to savor the feeling of sex with Hannibal Lecter. His need had been insatiable during heat, but now it wasn't so much a need at all, rather a want, and the hollowness that filled him during heat was now replaced with a feeling of fullness.

"Oh, Han…" Will breathed, wrapping his legs around Hannibal's waist, pulling him in deeper, until he stilled at the hilt. Will curled himself around Hannibal, wanting to keep him close, wanting to feel all of him. He buried his face in the crook of his neck, savoring the feeling of strong arms wrapped around him. This was what he had been missing for all these months. The last time that he'd been held this tightly, blood had been pooling at his feet.

Hannibal bit back tears as he clung tightly to his omega. This is what he had so foolishly given up when he fled. This was what he had sacrificed, and oh, what a foolish sacrifice.

Hannibal moved slowly, hips rolling in slow, lazy thrusts. His movements had always been fast, rough, taking his omega as fast and hard as he could in an attempt to satiate their need. But now, he moved slowly, purposefully, pointedly striking against his prostate with each slow thrust. He wouldn't last long, but that didn't seem to matter. The act itself, the pleasure of it, it didn't entirely matter, not as much as the intimacy of it all. The conjoinment of body and soul, of spirit and flesh.

Will let out a shuddered breath as Hannibal moved inside of him. He savored the slow drag of his cock sheathed inside of him, the feeling of fullness that came with accommodating Hannibal's length and girth, the emotions that flurried through him. He felt deeply, fully, entirely, this symphony of emotion that he could hardly place or comprehend. Joy for the consummation and conjoinment, relief at the warmth of his touch, pain in knowing that this would be their last, anger for letting himself get so close, longing for the life that they could have had. But over all else, the physical sensation took paramount importance, overwhelming all of him.

Hannibal thrusts into him felt like an apology. Like remorse had plagued him in their months apart, and this was the only way that he knew how to make it up. Through primal instinct and sensation, through the pleasure that he provided. Each thrust slow and purposeful and pointed, each movement designed to draw him closer to his climax. It was as though each thrust and touch and movement was meant specifically to bring him pleasure, to take care of him, without much regard for Hannibal's wants or needs.

"Atleisk man," Hannibal begged, slipping back into his native tongue. *"Atleisk man, mylimasis. Aš myliu tave. Aš nusidėjau, mano meilė, atleisk man."*

WIll let out a cry as Hannibal's hips began to slowly pick up speed. The friction of his cock trapped between their bellies, Hannibal's pointed thrusts pressing insistently against his prostate, the words of praise and love in a language that he didn't understand… He was getting closer, feeling his balls beginning to draw up close to his body as he threatened to spill over.

He didn't want for it to end so soon, knowing that there would be no coming back after this. The teacup would never come together again. They would fall apart and they would go back to their old wicked ways, struggle to survive such forceful separation, torn apart at the place of their conjoinment, left with long, mauled scars… But what choice did they have? Hannibal would never stop running, and Will couldn't keep chasing. This was closure.

"Gonna come, gonna come, Hannibal," Will panted, fingers spreading over the expanse of his back. He would have clawed, would have let nails rake over flesh, would have left marks, but he could feel the rough and raw outline of the Verger brand beneath his fingertips. He would not hurt him more, would not mark him any further, instead opting to rake his fingers gently through his hair. He hooked his ankles around his waist, pulling him in deeper, forcing the knot past his rim. It hurt - it always hurt - the thickest part of his cock always going in the hardest, but he pushed through the pain anyways. Anything if it meant being tied to him for just a little bit longer.

Hannibal's chest heaved as he clung tightly to his omega, rubbing up against him as his knot pushed past his rim. He didn't want it to end, didn't want this to fall apart, wanted to stay here with him, but neither of them could keep this up forever. Their orgasms would take them over. Hannibal's knot would keep them together a while longer, but it would deflate and they would part ways, never to come together again.

Will pulled back slightly, finding Hannibal's eyes. Brown eyes held him captive as his hands found the sides of his face, holding him close as he worked his knot past his rim, both struggling for composure in the midst of pleasure and pain.

"I love you. I love you. I still love you," Will confessed quietly, watching as the tears began to gather in his eyes as his knot pushed past his rim.

Will had always liked the warmth that came with Hannibal's orgasm, the explosion of hot seed filling his body. It was that sensation that pushed him over the edge into his own orgasm, drawing a cry from his lips as he came between them, hot, white semen splashing across their bellies, making a mess of them. He clung tight to Hannibal, holding him tight against his body as the tears rolled from his eyes, afraid to let go.

He wanted to talk. Wanted the words to confirm what they were both thinking. Wanted to know that they were doing what had to be done. But instead, Hannibal burst into tears above him, sobbing as he held him close. He had never thought Hannibal as the type to cry, especially not after sex, but now, it almost felt wrong not to be overcome by emotion. This was the closure that they had needed. This was letting go of something beautiful, and something dreadful.

The omega felt tears rising in his throat. He couldn't keep running with him, would never be able to catch up. They could never know peace like this, and Will was too tired to keep chasing. Happiness was meant for other people. They had never been designed for happiness. Only pain and bloodshed and misery and destruction. Blood and fire. They were destined from the beginning to find nothing but ruin. The idea that they could have anything more was mere delusion.

And so Will Graham let himself mourn, and cried, tears falling in agony as he clung to the alpha one last time.

"It's okay… It'll be okay," Will breathed, fingers running through silver hair. This last goodbye didn't need words more than these.

The alpha let out another ragged sob. Humiliating, this lack of composure, but the pain cared little for his dignity. After all the hell that they had put each other through, after all the ways that they had changed each other, Hannibal couldn't imagine what life might look like, letting him go. But sacrifices were demanded, and he would be forced to let go, lest they be pulled apart at the very seams.

But he didn't want to be let go.

If there was one thing that he knew now more than ever, it was that there was nothing worth losing Will Graham over. No matter the pain, no matter the sacrifice, every second was worth it if it meant standing by his side if only for a moment. Will Graham was worth every single sacrifice.

Hannibal breathed words that had been breathed once before, in a bed much like this one, in a situation much like this one. After their first heat spent together, as they lay tied together, holding as tightly as they could. Hannibal had murmured them with tears of unadulterated joy in his eyes that first time. But now, all joy had been sucked from those words, left with mourning so deep that it shook him to his core.

"Aš tave myliu, mylimasis… My omega."

Chapter End Notes

comments are still sustenance to my hungry writer soul.
also i'm really excited for the next chapter, it's gonna be gooooooooood.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“See?”

The word that started this journey, the word that would end it. The word that started this slow descent into madness, the word that had pushed him down the path that he walked, through the fire and the flood. It was an echo through time, beckoning him down the path that led him to this very moment. It was the word that drew him back to this, the word that beckoned his blade, the word that drew him back into Hannibal Lecter’s arms.

Will staggered closer to the man that stood before him, blood pooling hot between them as he clung to the alpha as if his life depended upon it. The rest of the world began to fade into the black, the two bound by the divine, the bluff calling them higher than all that burned around them. No Molly, no Walt, no Jack Crawford. No murder, no mercy. It was just Hannibal and Will, alpha and omega. Returned to the most primal of states, almost animalistic in their heaving breaths. Blood stained black against flesh in the moonlight, darkened eyes staring down in adoration and hunger, lust of the most primal sort.

And so the lamb stood victorious alongside the lion whose love had claimed. No longer to lay so helpless between the blood-soaked jaws of the predator, but to stand as his equal. The lamb’s wool stained black with blood, the bite of blade and filthy pride consuming what was left of any perceived purity. From the jaws of the lion had emerged something darker, something violent, something vengeful, like the angel become god. A darkness had been contained for too many years now, and all came flooding forth in a final crescendo, leaving the wrath of the lamb to lay evident beneath their feet. Pride swelled in the chest of the lion as he beckoned him closer, blood dripping from the jaws as they stood victorious, the dragon slain beneath them.

Ferocity and teeth were abandoned for the sake of arms pulled tight against him, pulling him tighter toward his grasp. His eyes found Hannibal’s, studying each inch of him beneath the light of the moon. Part of him wanted to pull him closer, claim his lips before the fall, feel the life of him fill his lungs one last time. Oh, so alive, so alight, beauty found in the blood staining stone, a masterpiece painted in their wounds, a symphony found in the rise and fall of his chest.

Nothing would ever come close to this moment. His unsteady feet stood shaking on the peak of Mount Everest, standing at the apex of all emotion. The chains that he had bound himself in, the locks of social convention and man-made morality, they fell from his wrists and tumbled over the bluff, consumed whole by the ocean. For the first time in his life, there was freedom, the weight of iron chains no longer keeping him so closely bound to the earth. He would never feel anything close to this, and he could never ask for anything more.

“This is all I ever wanted for you, Will,” Hannibal breathed.

His hand drifted over Will's, drown his wrist and across the blood-stained palms. It was difficult to pinpoint just where the blood had come from, or who it belonged to, but blood proved to be able to paint masterpieces against stone and flesh, and Hannibal took something resembling comfort in the color of it. Rubies and blood, passion and fire, kiss-stained lips and suicide, love and death.

Hannibal's eyes scanned over his omega's face, studying each feature, memorizing how he looked in that moment. He wanted to capture it within the rooms of his memory palace, to share this room with him until the end of days. He wanted to memorize every second, every feature, every mark of blood staining his flesh, every cut and gash, every wound that marked him. This was the moment that he would take with him to his grave. Even when he was old and gray, when he got to be too old to remember anything at all, when his memory was fading and he couldn't picture Mischa's face anymore, when he couldn't remember the way that red wine tasted after a meal that had taken hours of preparation, when he couldn't remember the satisfaction brought in bloodshed, when he couldn't remember his own name, he would remember this moment.

His teeth began to itch, even dripping with another man's blood. Will's scent was overwhelming, and there was some overpowering desire to draw him closer, to lean down and take the flesh of his neck between his teeth. To bite down, to mark him and claim him, to bond with him even now. They would leave with scars from this night, what was one more?

But he refrained. Will would ask when he wanted it, and Hannibal was willing to wait for it.

Hannibal let out a breath as he looked around them. The crashing of waves, the blood blackened beneath the cold light of the moon, every surrounding inch stained and drenched in the blood of a dragon slain. Such bloodshed was not new, having stood bathed in it beneath the moon on more than one occasion. It was little more than commonplace now, but to stand with Will at his side… It was a moment that he had dreamt of for years now.

"For both of us," he murmured, drawing him closer to his chest.

Will's eyes met Hannibal's, an eternity locked within seconds. Expressions and thoughts and emotions all locked within their gaze, exchanged and cherished in ways that no one else would understand. Conjoinment was consummated in ecstasy, standing at the edge of the bluff in the moments before the fall as two words were drawn to his lips.

"It's beautiful."

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The crash and sting of the waves were more painful than he had expected them to be.

Hannibal had once mentioned suicide in one of their sessions, some remark to an old case from his days as an officer. There had been a school shooting during Will's first week on the
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job, four dead and another twenty injured. Some kid named Charlie, plotted and schemed and finally stole two of his father's guns before shooting up the place in a fit of rage. Will had been the first to respond to the scene. Had gotten there just in time to catch him darting back to his car at the sound of police sirens. Had gotten there just in time to watch him raise his gun in one last hoorah, a bullet fired through the head of a girl who had been in the wrong place at that wrong time. Had gotten there just in time to watch her blood and brains splatter across the brick. Had gotten there just in time to follow after the speeding car.

The chase that followed led them to a bridge, where Charlie abandoned his car and climbed over the railing, staring down at the river beneath them. For a moment, the monster who had just killed four people in cold blood was nothing more than a scared kid, and for just a moment, Will felt something akin to compassion.

"Charlie, c'mon, come down from there. I'm not gonna hurt you," he'd said, raising his hands up in surrender, gun pointed toward the sky. The metal had never felt quite so cold as it did that day, even as it came close to slipping with the sweat gathered in the palm of his hands. The wind was sharp, harsh, blowing the kid's long, dirty blonde hair in a thousand different directions. His hands grasped tight to the railing, knuckles white with the strain of it. *"Look, I'm gonna put the gun away, and we can talk, okay? We can talk about whatever's going through your head, okay? You're safe. You're safe now."*

"I'm not fucking safe," he'd shot back, his voice coming out broken, terrified. He looked almost horrified at his own actions, as though it had been under some possession, as if he hadn't meant to do what he did. *"Do you know what I did? I killed them. I shot them up, they're dead! I have to die now too."*

He muttered to himself, too quiet for Will to make out anything coherent beyond some muttered wish that he had done it at the school, that he had shot himself dead then and there. It was when he reached up to push his hair away from his eyes that Will made the grab for his wrist, holding tight and refusing to let him go. His training had taught him to pull the person away from the ledge, but the railing led to some complication. He could have thrashed, pulling them both down before Will could have gotten him back toward safety. So he did what he could. Hold him where he was.

Wild blue eyes shot back at him, paranoid and terrified and fucking livid. Will held tight until the free hand reached down, moving away from the railing and just barely keeping balance. Will let go at the glint of the gun, fearing the pull of the trigger and a bullet through the head, opting for self-preservation as opposed to his duty to protect and serve, even those who perhaps didn't deserve it. It was when he let go that Charlie Graves lost his balance and went tumbling down into the water.

Emergency responders arrived shortly thereafter. Paramedics, police officers, the whole lot of them, all while Will stood staring and silent at the place where Charlie had just stood before him. He vaguely registered the words from officers and the sight below him. They were able to fish him out of the river. He wasn't dead when they found him, either, not entirely, if very nearly. They were able to get him to the hospital, keep him alive long enough to hook him up to their machines, keep his lungs breathing awhile longer.

He lived for three days after. The doctors kept him cuffed to a bed, even comatose. His mother had cried for him, his father swore and cursed himself. Will stayed in the hospital waiting room, not daring the venture too close but not daring to stray too far. On the morning of the third day, the doctor was kind enough to inform him that things were looking up, and that he had a chance of making it. Things had been touch-and-go for awhile, but they expected a full recovery.

Of course, waking up from this only meant a lifetime behind bars. Will wasn't quite certain that recovery was the better option.

Maybe Charlie knew that too, because he never woke up. Maybe some part of him, brain or body, knew that there was no life for him after the crimes he had committed, and that was why. Maybe he knew that all he had waiting for him was a highly-publicized trial and a prison cell, and that was why he decided that it would be better to simply waste away. It wasn't half an hour later when they came out to inform him that Charlie had succumbed to a massive seizure, and that, despite all efforts, he was braindead.

He had expected to feel something when they told him that Charlie was dead, but there was nothing. He didn't cry for him, didn't mourn for him, felt very close to nothing. What reason did he have to mourn a murderer? How could he dare feel remorse for his death, the boy who senselessly slaughtered four of his own classmates? No, instead, he felt nothing, numb to the entirety of it. If he dared to feel anything, there was part of him that felt relief in his death. At least there would be no trial for him to speak at.

Will had recounted that story in one of their earlier sessions, when they'd discussed the deaths that had plagued his life. He discussed the guilt and the lack thereof, the images that still plagued his nightmares and the guilt felt for his very lack of guilt. They discussed the one thing that he could never figure out, the one thing that still haunted him.

"Why did he decide to jump?" Will had asked, picking at his fingernails, the memory of his fall playing like a video stuck on repeat. There one second, the next screaming all the way down. *"He had a gun. He had a gun, why didn't he just shoot himself? Why the hell would he jump? God, not to sound morbid, but there are more surefire ways of doing it, and he had one in his back pocket. Why the hell would he drive all the way out there just to jump?"*

Hannibal's response had been something given in even measure, as though he had given the topic a lot of thought himself. At that point in their relationship, Will was uncertain if he had learned all of this from a textbook, or if it was something that he had experienced firsthand. It was not until years later, when he learned all that had happened in his childhood, that he decided it was likely the latter. No one faced trauma like that without making the attempt at least once. Will knew it firsthand.

"Interesting thing, suicide taken in the leap from a bridge. There is something ultimately more hopeful in the water below. There is, yes, a large portion of them that wishes for the suffering to be over. But there tends to be a sliver, just a sliver, of them that clings to the hope of survival. Many of these people hoping for some percentage of survival that may change them because they're looking for change within themselves. They are seeking for the hand of the divine to intervene, to allow them their survival, because it means that they are alive for a reason."

And it had been much in the same as they fell from the bluff and into the tumbling waves. Part of him knew that he would never reach such highs again, not as long as he lived. Part of him wished to end it there, for the sake of dying a freed man or for the sake of destroying the monster that he had become. Part of him figured that such violent ends would only be becoming of them, neither quite deserving of growing old together, or even growing old alone in a prison cell.

But there was part of him seeking a sign. Part of him clung to the sliver of hope as they tumbled down, down, down into the ocean waves, the salt and sting like knives into already-opened wounds. Part of him prayed for a miracle, prayed that the universe would bring him up from the waves and allow him to live, declare that he was worthy of the air in his lungs. Part of him hoped for a sign that it was truly alright for him to allow this monster he had become to roam the earth.

And his sign came in the form of a sharp gasp for air and blue eyes finding the stars up above him. His sign came in the sand beneath his bloody palms and Hannibal's eyes finding relief as he took in the heaving breaths of ocean air. His sign came when he leapt and survived.

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In years spent apart, Hannibal lost count of the days, spending the majority of them locked away in the secret rooms of his memory palace. Rooms he shared with Will Graham, rooms that held memories of better times. It had been agony, knowing that Will Graham was living on the other side of those walls, free and perhaps even happy. He'd find another alpha, or perhaps a beta, fall in love, make their own makeshift family. He would learn to live without him, Hannibal being nothing more than a distant memory.

Hannibal had taken comfort in knowing that there would always be scars to remind Will of what they had, and that Will would never fully move on, never live a life free of the ghost of him. But he knew all too well that Will would find ways to forget a little more. Scars would grow fainter against the skin until they were nothing more than thin lines across flesh, and the same would happen to scars left imprinted in his mind. His memories would grow fainter, dull in their color until they were nothing more than shaky footage on black and white film, barely recognizable from what they had been before.

And the same would happen to Hannibal. The lines down his wrists were barely visible anymore, the rooms of his memory palace falling slowly into disrepair, the paint chipped away and the roof beginning to leak. It would come with age and time, until there was nothing for him to remember but glimpses and flashes.

It wasn't until Will came back to him that his hope was revived, spilling into his lungs again as he took the first breath he'd had in years. The color came back to his memories, restoring the rooms that had fallen apart the moment that Will Graham stepped into the room. Reunion on opposite sides of the glass, but it was enough.
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And finally, finally, after three long years spent apart, after years spent in a birdcage when he was meant to be freed, after years longing and wishing and waiting for Will Graham to return to him, they had finally come back together. Under blood and moonlight, everything that their relationship had been building up to came to a head as the dragon lay slain, whatever it was that they had finally consummated. Will had given into instinct, into his own bloodlust, and they had finally fallen in together, becoming one, whole with one another. Their broken teacup had been replaced with clay, left for them to build and mold whatever they wanted from this new life of theirs.

Their wounds would perhaps never entirely heal, and perhaps they would always be mangled and broken, but they were together and united at last, their broken edges fitting like puzzle pieces. They rose from their ashes and their dust, their broken shards of porcelain, emerging as dragonslayers. As heroes of their own makings.

Hannibal pulled them both to shore, and with some help from Chiyoh, they made it across the Atlantic and into familiar territories. They'd built a home and a life for themselves, just the two of them in a cabin in a forest on the outskirts of where he'd had grown up in Lithuania, close enough to the sea that they could roam to the shore whenever they pleased, but far enough from it to keep something of a rustic charm, with a large river just a ways off for Will to fish. It didn't take long for a secret hideaway to become home, a couple of dogs included.

It was a place prepared for the two of them, a place where love and binding could be found. It would take time to build a home out of their four walls, before they could find domesticity between them. But their wounds would heal, and scars would fade, and they would make something of the life that they had been given.

Hannibal was no fool, knew better than to think that he would calmly enter this new life with him. Three years had been spent waiting, rotting, writing letters to his beloved without reciprocation. Nor did he particularly deserve such reciprocation, after all that he had done. The scars that etched across Will's flesh had served as constant reminders as to just how little he deserved. But he was offered this rare gift, this rare chance at a life together, and Hannibal knew better than to believe that he would go without the fear of losing it all again.

But Will had not let him down yet.

They shared a bed, not because they had to, but because Will had followed him in on their first night in this new home. And as the sun broke over the horizon, Hannibal lay awake in their shared bed, the first rays of sunlight meeting Will's face, watching as he slept. Falling asleep next to him, waking next to him once morning came around again, it was more than anything he could have asked for. It was all that he had ever wanted.

They were coming in upon their third week spent together in glorious consummation. In their time together, they had stayed in bed most days, rarely up and about for any amount of time. Hannibal rose throughout the day to prepare food, difficult as it was, hindered by the wound in his side. He had stitched and sewn himself back together, offering the same to Will, taking care to make certain that they would heal well, putting his medical schooling to good use.

The past three weeks had been focused on healing, primarily. They lacked the energy for anything else. Sex and romance had failed to come up thus far, not that they were necessities

for their happiness. Far from it, in actuality. Quiet whisperings into all hours of the night, conversations had over wine, waking up wrapped in each other's embrace, whispering those three precious words when they thought that the other couldn't hear. Even when the fear seized in his chest, when he woke drenched in his own sweat from the nightmares in which Will up and left, there was comfort in Will's arms wrapped tight around his shoulders. There was comfort here. There was peace. There was something akin to domesticity.

This thing they had was pure, innocent beyond anything that Hannibal had ever known. There was something sweeter in it, warmer than the blood and the violence that they had known before. Blade and sex and gore was the only language that they had spoken for so long, the only language that Hannibal had known until now. But now they clung to something with a sweeter taste, cleaving to such long-lost innocence. There was no need for anything more between them for awhile, and Hannibal figured that he could have lived that way in perfect contentment for the rest of his days.

As long as Will Graham stayed at his side, he could find contentment in it. And by the smiles that Will gave, by the quiet laughter just barely restrained behind closed lips, by the looks exchanged between them, by the quiet promises of love and adoration spilled from his lips when he didn't think that Hannibal was listening, Will didn't seem to be going anywhere. And with that, Hannibal could die a happy man. He had Will. He needed nothing more.

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The music rang quiet through the halls of the place that they were growing to call home. Hannibal had owned this place for years, inherited it as a child. The Castle Lecter had fallen into disrepair, and such places would be far too conspicuous to take up residence, with too many ghosts haunting those walls anyways. Instead, their home was a cabin in the woods, far different from the palace in Baltimore that he'd owned before. The place wasn't quite so big, wasn't quite so intimidating. It felt more like his home in Wolf Trap than anything.

Perhaps that was why it was so easy to call it a home. It felt like home. Some dogs would be necessary, and some fishing lures, but they could build a home here, just the two of them. Even without the dogs, it was beginning to feel like home.

The fireplace was crackling, snow falling fresh outside the window. Will found himself curled up on the couch, watching as Hannibal tested out the keys of the piano. Hannibal had expressed his love for the harpsichord over the piano any day of the week, but the sound seemed to be growing on him. The strike of keys began to sound more alive, more sudden, richer in their notes. Or perhaps life had just improved for him, joy found in the simplest of moments, to the point where even the music sounded sweeter.

The book in his hands grew less and less interesting, opting rather to let it close and fall to the floor. Hannibal's eyes had fluttered closed, long fingers striking at the keys, and Will was left to watch in mesmerized awe. He was beautiful in ways that Will wasn't sure he had noticed before. Perhaps he had noticed it in moments fogged by heat, moments that he couldn't quite
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remember beyond hazy flashes, but this was the first time he had noticed with such a sober mind.

Hannibal had always stricken him with a dark sort of beauty. Like Lucifer himself, in the moments just before he fell from heaven, wicked and divine. Even before Will knew what he was, there was still some flicker of shadow behind his eyes. Some quiet darkness had always been in him, and there was beauty to be found in such infernal desires. But the shadows that had drawn Will's eyes had distracted him from the light until that moment.

The strike of the keys, the way that Hannibal's lips moved just ever so slightly as he mouthed the lyrics. His fingers were oftentimes drawn to the notes drawn by classical composers, preferring Vivaldi and Beethoven to anything that Will listened to, but the tune shifted away from Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" for the sake of Elvis Presley's "Can't Help Falling in Love" this time. It was as though his fingers were moved to pluck out a melody just for him, something romantic and old and familiar.

He was warm, and he was light, and there was something exquisite in him. Something beyond the shadows and the dark, something bright as the sun, warm as fire, something golden and dazzling just beneath the cloak of night and shadow. Something that beckoned him closer, drew him in, made him believe that this was something that could be sustained. This thing that they had didn't have to be bathed in blood and death, didn't have to be so violent as that. It would be part of their lives, but it didn't have to consume them. There could be good. There could be calm.

Will rose to his feet, making his way across the room in two long strides before sliding onto the bench next to Hannibal. The warmth of his body drew him tighter, beckoned him closer, shoulders pressed together as Hannibal's eyes found his. Bashful eyes turned away quickly, a sudden shyness about him that had never been there before, as if he weren't so confident without the cloak of his darkness. Still, the smile that spread across his lips made him certain that such bashfulness was in no way any form of rejection.

He watched his fingers pluck out their melody and listened to whispered words fall quietly from his lips, and decided that somebody needed to make the first move.

He didn't plan it, didn't intend for it to happen. It just happened.

Will's hand reached up, fingers brushing just beneath Hannibal's slightly-stubbly chin. Fingers beckoned Hannibal's eyes to meet Will's, meeting for split moment of silence. A mere moment spent in awe of each other, waiting for the first move to be made, waiting for someone to close the space between them. There was a split moment when the light burst forth between them, exploding hot and bright and wondrous in the second before Will leaned forward and claimed his lips.

It was soft and warm as the keys ceased their playing, leaving nothing but the sound of their breaths drawn in time, heartbeats loud in their chests. Hannibal's hands found the sides of his face, drawing him in tighter, chasing his kiss as though his lips were precious as oxygen. Will followed him down, fingers grasping tight at his shirt, fingers itching to take it off of him. To bare his bones and strip him down to nothing, to take him in whole right on that piano bench.

But he didn’t.

As quickly as the kiss had begun, it was over as Will pulled away softly. Better to wait, better to take things slow. The way things had unfolded before, passion hot and heavy under the guise of his heat, never fully establishing what it was that they shared between them, it hadn’t ended well. They had one shot at things playing out well, one shot to make things work, one shot at anything resembling domesticity. Will wanted to do it right. He wanted to take it slow.

So he pulled away and leaned against his shoulder. Sex would come later, but this was good as it was. Soft and quiet as Hannibal leaned against his touch, fingers rising to strike the keys again, plucking out old, familiar melodies with all the sudden quality of life in the very moment.

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“Heat’s coming soon,” Will said.

His voice was matter-of-fact about it, without any hint of emotion behind those words. Words that typically would have bore excitement, or fear, or something in between, now spoken with such nonchalance that it was almost foreign. Hannibal turned to him, eyes lifting from the book settled between his hands for just a moment before allowing them to travel back toward the pages.

“So I’ve noticed,” he answered just as unbothered, though his emotion was thinly veiled. He had existed somewhere between excitement and fear since he’d noticed the familiar shift in his scent. Part of Hannibal had wondered if Will even went into heat anymore - it had been three years, after all. While he was still a bit too young for it to have stopped naturally, there were procedures that he could have undergone. There was always the chance that the trauma he had endured from the drag of Hannibal’s blade had ceased the process altogether, though he had been careful in his attempt to avoid his uterus. He hadn’t wanted to risk opening Pandora’s box with questions, their little domesticity still too new to be threatened with such touchy questions, so he kept his mouth shut. He refrained from questions, and refrained from speaking his surge of joy at the first whiff of fever.

“Of course you did,” Will muttered, flipping through the pages of his novel. These days, he was healed enough to dress himself more often than not, no longer confined to the t-shirt and boxers that he had spent the first few weeks in. He typically changed into a pair of jeans at the very least, but he had neglected to today. The days before heat could be uncomfortable, so he’d opted for a pair of old silk pajamas that he’d found tucked in a wardrobe somewhere. Pale blue, soft, absolutely divine.

Sex hadn’t crossed their radars quite yet, opting for something a little slower, a little softer. They kissed, though it never got too far, never got too heavy, never got too hot. They were small kisses, grazes against lips, fingers pushed gently through dark curls, gentle enough that Hannibal feared he might shatter. Sex had seemed like too distant a thing from that, but soon,
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it would cross the line into inevitability. Neither would be able to resist it once Will devolved into his heat. It would become necessity.

Part of him, though, feared that Will would resist him. Feared that Will would pull himself away, hide from him like he hid from the bad men. He feared what damage he had done, feared what scars remained, wondered if he had damaged him in the same way that his abusers had damaged him. He feared the consequence of his own action, and had neglected to mention it for fear of the answer. But Will, sitting across from him, looked perfectly nonchalant.

“Go pick up some condoms tonight, alright?” he said. “And the special ones that are designed for heat, normal ones are gonna break in two seconds.”

There was half a moment of disappointment. There had been a part of him that longed for a second chance at the life they could have had before. Some part of him longed for a child, longed for life to be created between the two of them. Some part of him longed for a child to fill the hole that he had left with the slice of a blade, longed to give the recompense owed in the form of seed spilled between his thighs. Some part of him longed to return all that he had taken in the only way that he knew how.

But the moment faded and he quickly came to find unadulterated joy rising up in his chest.

All had not been lost. Forgiveness was granted and Will wanted him in all his forms. He could have leapt for joy, but was content to stay seated where he was, smiling softly to himself. He would rise later, head out into the city and pick up a box of condoms, gather some things necessary for heat. Perhaps he’d buy heat pads for the bed, or perhaps he would let his scent linger them far after one, two, three washes. Perhaps he would bring home something to pamper his omega as his heat approached. Perhaps he would come home and pluck out a melody on the piano again, something joyous and warm this time. But for that moment, he was content to sit across from his Will and smile.

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He was uncomfortable.

He was always uncomfortable in the days before his heat, it was was just part of the process. He was fussy, and tired, and horny as his body prepped itself for heat. These days were usually spent in bed when he could, though in his time with Hannibal Lecter, he had a tendency to work himself nearly to death until the very moment the floodgates broke. But his days of working himself past the point of exhaustion were behind him, so it seemed.

Hannibal proved that he could be nurturing, in spite of all his violent tendencies. He insisted the omega stay in bed, cooked for him, kept him comfortable. It felt nearly clinical, with only hints of affection every now and again. A kiss against the forehead, a peck against the lips, fingers pushed through sweaty curls, only enough affection to set him apart from a clinician.
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His touches were more distant than they had been before, more careful in the way that they brushed over his flesh, and with the hormones revving up for heat, Will found himself growing more and more frustrated.

Will knew the source of his reservations well enough. They'd not had sex since their rebirth, hadn't even broached the subject of it. There was something too risky in it, as though they might both shatter should they even bring it up. Some mutual understanding had been met, that they wouldn't even consider it until he went into heat. After that, the rules may shift, the conversation would be brought onto the table, but not a moment sooner. Though, it was proving to be difficult. Will was horny and Hannibal could smell it, had walked in on him masturbating at least twice. Both of them wanted, but they had resigned themselves to waiting.

But Will was not so stubborn, not so strong-willed as usual, not with the cloud of heat hanging over his head, threatening to burst.

He was fussy and cramping when Hannibal walked in to check on him. Fussy noises fell from his lips every now and again, unbecoming of a grown man, but he couldn't bring himself to give a shit. He whined, pain radiating through him, throbbing and insistent as he curled in tight on himself, burying his face into the sheets. He was hot, skin sheen with sweat, nothing but a thin sheet to cover him. He was stuck somewhere between awake and asleep, a place where he had lingered for the majority of the day. A low whine was dragged from his throat at the scent of Hannibal entering the room, wishing for some relief that only he could offer.

"Will," Hannibal murmured, stepping closer to the bed, taking his place on the edge as a hand rested against his leg, rubbing circles from above the sheet. "How are you feeling?"

"Cramps," Will mumbled, letting out a low groan. *"Fuck.* Hurts."

Hannibal paused for a moment, then turned to face him, beckoning his eyes toward him.

"I could offer you a massage, if you would allow for it," Hannibal offered, his eyes discreetly hungry, aching for any touch that Will would allow him. He had been afraid to ask for anything more, but…

It wasn't exactly the sort of release that Will had been aching for, but it was better than nothing. Besides, he knew that it would fare him well, to fall like putty between Hannibal's strong hands. Those hands, pressing and kneading into him, easing his ache… He turned to face him, mustering as much of a smile as he could, and nodded.

"I'll go get the oil, then," Hannibal said with a small smile, rising to his feet and disappearing for a moment before returning, a small bottle of oil in hand and a towel tossed over his shoulder. Will lay pliant as Hannibal worked around him, laying out the towel and pulling the sheet down far enough to bare him from the waist up, ending just above his flaccid cock, the downy patch of hair leading down beneath it. A teasing pathway to the thing that he really wanted touched, but he voiced no such thoughts.

Will felt exposed, there on his back, so close to being stripped down bare. Should his cock begin to harden, there would be no hope for hiding it beneath such thin sheets in such a vulnerable position. Part of him wanted to turn onto his side, onto his stomach, any way that wasn't so open and exposed. It would have been entirely too easy for Hannibal to straddle his waist and press a hand against his throat, for him to choke the very life from him. It would have been so easy for him to reopen the scar placed on full display, leave him to bleed out on the bed, and Will would have been helpless to stop him…

But he decided to trust him. He decided to put his faith in the man, decided to allow him in close, decided to allow him to touch him in such intimate ways, allowed himself to be so vulnerable. He drew in a breath as Hannibal took his place at the side of the bed, pouring the oil into his hand.

Will's eyes drifted closed, focused on his breathing as the pain began to throb again, and he resisted the urge to double over and curl in on himself. He listened as the cap popped from the bottle, waiting as Hannibal poured it into his hand before allowing it to drip against his chest and down his abdomen.

A soft sigh escaped his lips as Hannibal's hands made firm contact against his flesh. The pain began to ease at his very touch, as if such a simple thing as contact from his alpha was enough to ease his aching. His muscles began to relax, the feeling of being open and exposed no longer so foreign and unwelcomed. It was warm, and it was sensual, and Hannibal's hands working down the expanse of his torso didn't feel so different from sex.

A soft moan escaped his throat as Hannibal's hands found his lower belly, just above the place where his uterus lay. Two fingers of each hand pressed against either side, rubbing circles over the source of his pain. The remnants of the aching fled at his touch, offering an odd sort of sensation in its place. Slick, warm hands kneading into him, drawing the pain away, so close to such sensitive spots… Will could hardly strangle his moan, and could do little to hide his stiffening cock.

There was no way that Hannibal wouldn't notice it. Will knew better than to be embarrassed, knew that there was no way that he could help it this close to his heat. Even still, there was a small twinge of humiliation at the thought of what it must look like to Hannibal. Fingers kneading away the pain in his abdomen, some kind gesture in hopes of taking care of his omega, only to look down and see the stark outline of his hardening cock beneath the sheets. Will bit back his humiliation as he lay there, struggling to turn his focus to anything else.

Hannibal didn't speak, didn't say a word about it, much to Will's relief. Instead, a hand moved toward Will's back, coaxing him to roll over onto his stomach. He obeyed, deciding that Hannibal's hands felt too good to disobey. He turned over onto his front, allowing himself just a moment to rut against the towel, quick enough to pass it off as simply adjusting. Hannibal didn't seem to notice - or, if he did, he didn't say anything about it. His hands simply returned to his flesh, kneading down his back.

It felt good. Felt damn good, leaving him aching for more. Hannibal's hands hadn't touched him like this in years, hadn't been quite so intimate since long before the fall. Even at their last moment of conjoinment, after the massacre at Muskrat Farm, after Hannibal had walked miles and miles just to tuck him back into bed, Hannibal hadn't touched him like this. Those

touches had been soft, almost hesitant, almost uncertain. This time, his hands remained firm, steady against his spine, commanding his attention as he melted into his touch.

Will's breath hitched as Hannibal's fingers dipped just beneath the sheet, and paused.

"May I?" he asked.

Will stilled a moment, cock twitching hard against the bed beneath him, and nodded.

Hannibal folded the sheet carefully over, baring his ass to him. Will buried his face into the pillow and strangled a whine as Hannibal's hands began to knead at his ass, working him open from the outside. The storm clouds were threatening to burst, heat threatening to give way, body threatening to devolve into raw need and primal urge. Still, he held himself together as Hannibal slowly spread him open and his cock twitched hard.

"You're hard," Hannibal said plainly, stating fact without much emotion in his voice. Too damn clinical, as always. Will let out a small groan, burying his face into the pillows, voicing his humiliation. "It is common for sex drive to increase in the beginning stages of heat, it is nothing to be ashamed of. Such sensual activity with your alpha at this time of your cycle, arousal was almost inevitable. Would you like for me to… help you with that?"

"Yes," Will breathed without hesitation, abandoning any reservation toward sex. He wanted it, wanted whatever Hannibal had to offer him. He wanted all of it.

He heard the cap of the oil click again, listened as Hannibal poured more into his hand before returning it to the cleft of his ass, coating it all the way down his thighs. He sighed as Hannibal's fingers pried him open before slicked fingers probed against his twitching rim. Will was almost certain that it would be enough to start his heat, but it wasn't quite yet.

He cried out at the initial breach. One finger pressed inside of him, immediately aiming for his prostate, not offering a moment to adjust. Will's fingers tensed against the sheets, gripping for dear life as Hannibal's finger rubbed insistently against that spot, the place that never failed to bring him to begging. Another finger was brought to his rim, massaging lightly at the taut ring of muscle until he relaxed enough to take a second digit.

Will had touched himself plenty in the past few days, seeking to appease the ache, seeking to calm his raging hormones as his body prepped itself for heat. But none of his attempts were quite so satisfying as his alpha's fingers pressed deep inside of him, massaging at his most intimate spot. None of it even came close.

He found himself rutting against the bed with reckless abandon, setting pace with Hannibal's fingers as a third buried itself inside of him. What initially felt almost clinical quickly grew far from it as Hannibal shifted, kneeling on the bed between his thighs to offer himself better leverage. His free hand, still slick with oil, pushed through his curls before trailing down his back, finally resting at his hip, guiding the movement of his jerky thrusts against the mattress.

Hannibal leaned over him, fingers unrelenting as his breath shuddered hot against Will's ear. Will could feel his cock nudge against the cleft of his ass, stiff within the confines of his slacks. He desperately wanted his alpha out of those clothes, wanted him just as bare as he

was. He wanted to feel the familiar scratch of chest hair against his back, wanted to feel the heat of Hannibal's skin against his own, wanted to feel the twitch and throb of his alpha's length pressed against his thigh. But for the moment, he was content with the soft thread of his sweater and bare fingers flicking inside of him.

"Will you prop yourself up on your knees for me, Will?" Hannibal instructed softly, and Will obeyed without hesitation and without question. He would abandon his stubborn ways for the sake of Hannibal's fingers inside of him, for the sake of whispers against his skin.

He let out a sharp cry as Hannibal's free hand curled tight around his weeping cock, stroking him in time with the thrusts of his fingers. Will's voice carried unrestrained from his lips, back arching sharply as he rocked into his touch. It was intense, all-consuming as he lay subject to his touch.

He could hardly breathe, hardly form a coherent thought. Hannibal redoubled his efforts, fingers working harder inside of him, milking his orgasm from him, demanding the fruits of his labor. He wanted to hear him come, wanted to hear him cry out, wanted to feel him twitch and contract, wanted to watch him orgasm…

And who was Will to deny him?

With a shout, Will was pulled to his climax, curls thrown back as he rolled and bucked into Hannibal's touch, chasing his orgasm as his semen splattered hot and wet into the towel beneath them. Hannibal stroked him to completion, until his knees were weak and he struggled to keep himself upright.

It wasn't until he started to come down that he felt the slick pulse from between his thighs. His production of slick always slowed to a stop in the days just before heat, just before the flood. And the flood came bursting forth, leaking hot down the backs of his thighs as Hannibal pulled his fingers out, immediately pulling forth the hollow need that came alongside heat. He needed more than fingers, needed more than the short-term satisfaction of his orgasm. He needed his alpha inside of him. He needed his knot.

"Han," he moaned, demanding his attention, demanding more of him.

"You're a naughty boy, *mylimasis,"* Hannibal cooed, his voice sweet, seductive, drawing a whine from Will's throat. Hannibal lined up the outline of his cock against the place between his thighs, propped hard against his weeping rim. He was achingly hard, slacks obscenely tented, and as Will rocked back against him, he could feel the swell of his knot. "It seems you've sent me into rut. And what's to be done about that?"

Will could feel himself devolving, barely able to cling to the thoughts as they came. The only thing that he could seem to focus on was the hard outline of his cock pressing against him, rubbing himself up against his knot from beneath his slacks. He absently wondered if he would be punished for ruining them, and part of him hoped that he might be. To be pinned against the bed, to be fucked mercilessly until Hannibal knotted him…

"Please," was the only word that he could manage to bring to his lips.

He whimpered as Hannibal rose up, pulling ever so slightly away from him, reaching up toward the nightstand. Will watched as he grabbed a condom, listened as he tore it open. Some small part of him wanted to demand that he stop, wanted to take him bare, wanted Hannibal to seed his belly and fulfill their biological demands. But what remained of his rationality forced his mouth shut, knowing better than to ask for such regrettable things.

Hannibal didn't need to prep him any further, and held no hesitation. Will turned to watch as he stripped himself bare, tossing his clothes aside before taking his cock in hand. He watched as he took the condom, rolling it over his cock before steadying himself between Will's thighs, leveling himself against his twitching rim.

There was a push, and relief.

He let out a sharp whine as Hannibal bottomed out within him. The alpha draped himself overtop of him, hips pistoned as he began to thrust, setting a brutal pace. He didn't wait, wasn't quite so gentle as he had been the first time they did this. This time, Hannibal was relentless, animalistic, chasing after his own pleasure and desires.

The first time they had done this, Will had been fragile. He had been cowering, terrified of his own biology, despising his heat for the memories that it brought. But Will didn't need to be treated so delicately anymore. He was no longer some fragile teacup on the verge of shattering with one wrong move, no longer on the cusp of breaking with the first gush of slick. He was made of iron and stone, and was capable of taking such animalistic treatment. He was more than capable of it. He craved it. He needed it.

His voice came out unrestrained, words that he couldn't quite comprehend himself spilling from his lips. Words chanted and cried out loud enough to wake the forest spilled from his lips as Hannibal drilled against his prostate, his cock hardening painfully between his legs. His thighs trembled and his fingers grasped desperately at the sheets, and there was only one coherent thought that he could pull from the mess.

Hannibal was going to milk him dry.

And Will would gladly lay subject to it. He wanted it, wanted to be completely drained and filled with Hannibal's cock instead, wanted to take his knot over and over until neither of them could get hard anymore. He wanted to lay boneless beneath him, knotted and fucked so hard that he wouldn't even be able to keep his eyes open.

And Hannibal, it seemed, would be more than willing to oblige. Will felt his knot swelling, thickening, tugging against his rim as Hannibal rutted deep into him. Will's cries came unrestrained as he approached his second climax, threatening to come untouched as Hannibal buried himself deeper, pressing more and more insistently against his prostate. Neither of them were going to be able to last long this time around, after so many years without.

"Taking my cock so well, *mylimasis,"* Hannibal praised softly, pressing kisses against his ear as his knot threatened to catch. "Such a good boy for me, my love. Perfect, Will. Divine."

Will whined with his words of praise, nearly collapsing beneath him. He tried to speak, tried to find the words, but he found himself too fogged by heat to think clearly, to find words that

made any sense. He finally settled with three, just hardly strung together, just barely coherent. “Love you, alpha.”

Hannibal’s fingers curled beneath his chin, drawing Will’s eyes to meet his own. Will studied his eyes, just barely sober and filled with absolute adoration. Hannibal only ever looked at Will that way, with such love and reverence, and Will considered himself lucky to be looked at that way.

“Aš tave myliu, mylimasis,” Hannibal murmured, words shared just between the two of them, loud enough only for Will to hear. He wasn’t sure of the exact translation, but he could feel their meaning in the way that they were spoken. A small smile tugged at Will’s lips in the moment just before Hannibal claimed them, kissing him with all passion and intensity and unadulterated love.

Will melted into his kiss as he was pulled to his climax for a second time, trembling as he came. He felt Hannibal press himself deeper, knot catching at his rim. There was no gush of seed this time, no relief and release in the way it had been before, but it was satisfying all the same. Wonderful all the same.

He fell against the towel, and Hannibal followed after before pulling them both onto their sides, arms wrapped tight around him. Will leaned back against his chest, a soft purr drawn from his chest as Hannibal’s lips pressed kisses up and down his neck. It was warm, and it was soft, and it was domestic. And this time, it wasn’t going to end when his heat ended. This time, it was going to last. This time, he didn’t have to give it up for some violent game that only ever ended in pain and agony. This time, it was his to keep. This peaceful little domestic life of theirs.

“I’ve missed that,” Will chuckled after a quiet moment.

Hannibal smiled, pressing a kiss just behind his ear. “I confess, I have as well.”

Will smiled, turning again and claiming his alpha’s lips again and again and again. Kisses exchanged, soft and warm and easy as Hannibal shuddered and came inside of him again. It was caught by the condom, and while he was denied the pleasure of the damp warmth gushing inside of him, he could still take pleasure in watching Hannibal’s *oh* face. That was a sight for the gods, that was for damn certain.

“So this is our life now?” Will sighed, leaning heavy against him, dark curls pressed against his shoulder. “No more fighting, no more trying to kill each other, no more godlike forgiveness, no more gloating? Just you and me and this domestic little thing of ours?”

“Just you and me and this domestic little thing of ours,” Hannibal echoed softly, pressing a kiss against his jaw. “Is that what you would like for us? Domesticity?”

“We don’t deserve it,” Will said, fingers locking through Hannibal’s.

“That isn’t what I asked.”

Will paused and considered it. He had something akin to domesticity once, some good life built with Molly and her son and their dogs. All that time, he had felt undeserving and dissatisfied, aching for some other life alongside Hannibal Lecter. But domesticity alongside Hannibal had hardly even been considered, really, some distant fantasy as opposed to anything that could be brought into reality. This thing that they had was too good for the two of them, far beyond what either of them deserved. They deserved death and damnation for their sins, for their crimes against humanity.

But sin was constructed by man, and they were no ordinary men. They were gods in their own rights, and they existed above man-made murder and man-made mercy. Even Hell had its kings, and perhaps even they could exist in some happily ever after here. Perhaps they could have domesticity, or something like it.

“I think so,” he said, curling tighter against Hannibal’s chest.

“Is this all that you have ever wanted for us, Will?” he murmured.

Will smiled softly and turned to kiss him again, smiling against his lips. Whatever life he had imagined for the two of them had always ended in blood and murder, and perhaps they would still meet their bloody demise. Their violent delights would still meet their violent ends, and they would surely meet their violent ends one day. But until then, he would savor in their peaceful little domesticity, appreciate every moment shared.

“Everything and more.”

Chapter End Notes

gimme some love, y'all.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will woke in the same way that he oftentimes woke. An empty bed and rumpled sheets, and the scent of sausage and eggs and coffee wafting through an open bedroom door. The curtains had been opened and sunlight streamed through to wake him softly, early morning light drawing him gently from sleep.

It had been this way for quite some time now. This quiet domesticity had become the norm, rising and falling with the sun in an easy rhythm. Will had grown to love this quiet life of theirs, had fallen in love with the halls of their little cabin. He'd fallen in love with the river that flowed just ten minutes from their home, had fallen in love with the way that the sunlight filtered through the leaves in the dying sunlight. He fell in love with the strays that they had picked up, the six dogs that Will had collected and trained. He fell in love with their life lived from heat to heat and rut to rut.

The sausage was drawn from the side of a priest with a penchant for touching young boys this time. They'd killed him together, as they usually did these days. Better together than to do it alone. There were occasions when Hannibal would go hunting on his own, seeking to reclaim some sense of youth, seeking to provide for his omega, and Will let him. Will didn't share the same thirst to do things alone, but there were occasions when Hannibal would bring someone into their killing room and as him to deliver the final blow. There was some voyeuristic part of Hannibal that liked to watch him as he devolved into something more animalistic, savoring in the transformation. Will liked to indulge him from time to time, but they both had a tendency to agree that the act was more enjoyable when done together. Though, Will still mostly left the cooking to Hannibal.

Will let out a quiet groan as he drew himself up to his feet. He was no longer so young and spry as he had been years ago, now plagued with back aches and sore joints in the morning. But Hannibal kept him loose most of the time, insistent upon yoga and exercises to keep them mostly in shape, if for nothing more than the sake of the hunt. That, of course, didn't stop him from waking up sore after nights of vigorous sex, when Hannibal pounded into him so roughly that he couldn't walk straight. It only really happened in the week just before his heat, when Hannibal's body was preparing itself for rut and they were both too horny to care about how they felt in the morning. He groaned, stretching out his aching limbs before gathering up his pajama bottoms from the floor, pulling them on without much regard to the fact that they hadn't been washed. He pushed his hair out of his eyes and shrugged on a flannel, rubbing his eyes as he padded across the wooden floors on bare feet, following the scent of coffee.

"Good morning," he yawned, stepping closer to his alpha, arms slinking around his waist, chin perched on his shoulder. Nauseatingly sweet, altogether too domestic for whatever brand of crazy they were. The blood of their latest victim still stained the small room in the basement, and yet here they were, exchanging small kisses over breakfast.

“Good morning, my love,” Hannibal greeted, turning to steal a kiss from his lips before returning to the eggs. “How did you sleep?”

“Like a log,” Will said, pulling away in favor of the coffee maker, cracking his neck as he reached for a mug. “I’m thinking I’d like to go back to bed after breakfast.” He paused a moment as the coffee filled his cup. “And I’m thinking you should join me.”

Will was rarely so forward, preferring subtle manipulations to lure him into bed, but his heat was due to start later that week. His hormones weren’t quite so leveled, and he was horny. Hannibal offered a smile in response before scooping his eggs and sausage onto a plate and offering it to Will.

“After breakfast,” Hannibal echoed, heading toward the dining room table.

Hannibal had always carried himself with a dark sort of beauty, cloaked beneath shadow and intimidation that could have brought Will to his knees. Over the years, Will had caught glimpses of something lighter, something warmer, had caught him in a more beautiful light than the dim and shadow that he clung to. In their years of domesticity, the light grew ever brighter, no longer flickers surrounded by darkness, but something that drove the darkness fleeing into the corners of his eye.

But there were moments when the beauty of him was neither dark nor light, but merely aesthetic.

The way he walked, clad in nothing other than his robe, could hardly be considered anything other than *hot.* Will felt tempted to pull him to the counter, rip it off and ride him until he’d had his fill, leaving the robe in a heap on the floor. Hannibal, of course, would never let it stay on the floor where the dogs might get hold of it, would insist it be put somewhere safe. He always did fucking love that robe. They’d bought them in a set; his and his robes they’d picked up two years ago. Hannibal had taken him away for a vacation that summer, down to a seaside cottage in Venice. Will remembered the night after they bought them, how Hannibal had donned his so proudly, how he had smiled when Will finally pulled on his own.

Sentimental bastard.

Will smiled to himself, admiring the view, mind turning toward fantasies of what was underneath. He got his fill of what was underneath on a regular basis, the two of them damn near insatiable still, even after all these years. It was all so terribly domestic these days, save for the room in the basement. All the things that Will had imagined for himself finally come to fruition.

Well, nearly all the things.

There were some things that they could not have, some things that he would deny himself, but even without, Will was content. He was joyous in what they shared, happy in the life that they had built for themselves. Gods among men finally allowed to revel in their godhood. There were few things they could never touch, but Will decided that they didn’t need them. All that they needed was right here.

Will sighed, before deciding that he was feeling more impatient than usual this morning.

He placed his food and coffee down on the table and waited until Hannibal had seated himself before kneeling in front of him. Hannibal watched without a word as Will untied his robe, gently pushing it aside and admiring the view. He was hung, that was for certain, even when he wasn't quite hard. Will's appetite had grown for it as the years passed by, having gone from little more than mere necessity to something that he craved, something that he ached to have inside of him at any time it was offered.

"Your food's going to get cold," Hannibal reminded in soft protest.

"Yep," he said without inflection, not minding either way. He was never one for breakfast anyway, until Hannibal came around and pushed it upon him, insisting that it was the most important meal of the day or whatever bullshit. He would've preferred this, anyway.

He allowed his tongue to dip gently beneath the foreskin, swiping his tongue across the slit as Hannibal began to harden in his mouth. Will liked the way that he tasted, liked the heady feeling against his tongue, liked to feel the weight of it in his mouth. He liked when Hannibal stood up and used him, thrusting into his mouth as though it were little more than simply another hole for him to fuck. He liked when Hannibal was rough with him, liked those rare occasions when Hannibal would manhandle him and bring him to his knees. But he also liked the fact that he had that same power at nothing more than the swipe of his tongue.

There was nothing quite like when Hannibal beneath the scrutiny of his mouth. There were times when he would stand up and fuck his throat, sure, but more often than not, his tongue was all that was required to create a simpering mess out of Hannibal Lecter. All composer and class until those very moments, when he was condensed to nothing more than trembling and praises fallen unrestrained from his lips. Will tended to like that most.

"Any particular occasion I'm forgetting?" Hannibal asked, struggling to maintain composure as he was brought to full hardness against Will's tongue.

Will swallowed him down, taking his cock in full, allowing it to nudge against the back of his throat before pulling off with a *pop*. "What?" he asked, small smirk teasing at his lips. "I need an occasion to suck you off?"

"You're rarely so unprompted," he sighed as Will took him back into his mouth, taking him in deep, tongue teasing around the place where his knot was beginning to form. "Not that I'm - *ah!* - complaining."

Will grinned around his length, looking up with teasing eyes, testing eyes, gauging his reaction, hoping that he might pull him off and fuck him right there. But he was patient, controlled, content to watch him lick and suck with blue eyes staring up, even as Will's own arousal grew painful.

But if there was anybody who could force him to abandon his self-control and self-constraint, it was Will. And he was determined. He was stubborn.

Will let a hand slip between his legs, tugging his straining cock free from the cotton confines of his pajama bottoms. He would have stroked himself, brought himself to completion, but there were better ways of going about that. He adjusted himself, moving closer to him, pressing his cock up against his alpha's leg, grinding himself up against it in time with the bobs of his head.

Fingers laced tight through Will's curls, moans flowing unrestrained from his lips. Hannibal was by no means quiet during sex, but it was only when Will fell to his knees that he ever sounded quite so debauched. Will could've come to the sound of his name on Hannibal's lips alone.

His hips picked up a more fervent pace, desperate for the friction, rutting against his leg like an animal in heat. Pre-come smeared down his shin, clinging in the hair there, making a mess of the both of them. It was lewd, filthy, hardly appropriate, but neither quite seemed to care.

Even still, he made no move to draw him up and onto his cock in the way that he might have hoped. A more direct approach proved necessary, so it seemed.

"C'mon," Will whined, mouth pulling away from his cock, lips swollen and slick with saliva and pre-come. He rolled his hips, making his erection even more evident against his leg, demanding friction as he allowed himself to thrust. Even still, it wasn't what he wanted, wasn't what he needed. "Are you really gonna make me hump your leg like a dog, or are you gonna take me to the bedroom and fuck me?"

"I do recall, Will," he said with a small smirk. "You were the one who initiated this. It seems only polite that you finish it."

Will let out a whine, something pathetic as he rested his head against Hannibal's thigh, still rutting against his leg. "You and I both know," he said, pulling himself up to straddle Hannibal's lap. "There are better places to knot me than my mouth."

"Perhaps you deserve to have that mouth of yours knotted," Hannibal teased, a thumb reaching up to run over his lips, pink and swollen and tempting. "It may do you some good."

"You don't really wanna knot me there, though," Will tested, grinding himself down on Hannibal's cock, testing just how far he could push before he got himself into the best kind of trouble.

There was some quick internal debate that flashed behind Hannibal's eyes, trying to decide whether to appease him or to torture him awhile longer. Finally, he decided on the former - Hannibal always was kinder to him in the days leading up to his heat, always putting his insatiable wants above his own proclivities toward hours of teasing and torture and foreplay.

A growl, hungry and damn near feral, escaped Hannibal's throat as he hoisted him up into his arms, claiming his mouth as he carried him toward the kitchen counter, deciding that the bedroom was too far away. He rarely defiled his kitchen with such activities, but there were some things that could not be kept waiting.

Will let out a sharp cry as Hannibal lowered him to the floor with little preamble, shoving him up against the counter and turning him around, leaving him to cling to the edges as Hannibal had his way with him.

He didn't resist when Hannibal got so rough with him, appreciating the force behind each touch. He sometimes offered up as much roughness as he was given, proving that he could be just as wild, just as feral, but there were other times when he simply took it. Bracing himself against the counter, he allowed himself to take it, crying out as Hannibal's hands tugged down his pajama bottoms to pool around his ankles and pulled him apart, his tongue pressed hard against his twitching rim.

"That's more like it," Will breathed, struggling to hold himself steady against the counter, struggling to keep his knees from buckling underneath him. His breath hitched as his tongue speared deep into him, and a finger joined his tongue.

He was too close to his heat to produce more than a few drops of slick, but Hannibal coaxed what he could out of him pretty quickly. His rim began to wetten, body opening and pliant to his alpha, preparing for their coupling. One finger became two, and two became three, until he was sufficiently opened and prepared.

He gripped the counter tight as Hannibal rose to his feet, cock pressing against his lower back as the alpha let out a low growl, possessive and hungry for him. Will keened against him, coaxing him in deeper as Hannibal steadied himself, giving himself a few cursory pumps before lining himself up.

"Food's gonna get cold," Will teased, hoping that it might make Hannibal fuck him faster, harder.

Hannibal let out a huff, nipping at Will's ear before pushing in. "Let it freeze."

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Hannibal rose again once his knot deflated, having laid Will out onto the bed to let him sleep. His scent was warm, bordering on feverish, the dam waiting to break. His heat would come in the next few days, and Hannibal would take care of him until it came, as he always did.

He pulled the robe back around his waist, deciding that getting dressed would be a futile effort. Will would certainly have him out of his clothes again quickly, the hormones preparing him for heat driving him to the point of insatiability. And Hannibal was always happy to oblige.

He moved quietly to the kitchen, cleaning away the breakfast that had long gone cold, deciding to store it in the fridge rather than let it go to waste. He tidied up, moving quietly as to not wake his sleeping omega, smiling to himself as he worked.

He smiled more often these days. He was a man who had always sought out pleasure in his life, no matter where it may have led him. He had never sought after contentment, after
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peace, after something other than the thrill, but it was precisely what he had ended up with, and he was all the better for it.

They resumed working, under false names and false identities. Hannibal had started a new practice, Will had taken up a teaching position. They still killed when appropriate, spent plenty of time in the room in the basement, still sought after thrill and blood in the moonlight. But their life was far more domestic than what Hannibal had ever thought himself capable. A place had been made for them in this world, hidden away from all the king's horses and all the king's men.

It was a place that should have been made for all of them.

A place where Abigail could have existed in their world. A place where the children that he had given to Will could have been born, where they could have grown up. There should have been children there, running on wobbling legs alongside their dogs, plucking out simple tunes on the harpsichord. There should have been life blooming within these four walls, a family to be grown here. But instead, the halls were empty save for the two of them.

He wanted to broach the subject, but the words always died in his throat. Perhaps he simply knew better than to ask for such things again, knowing well that Will had no reason to trust him with such blessed things, knowing that is was well within his nature to destroy them. Still, as he gathered up the dishes and put them in the sink, cleaning up the kitchen before starting on lunch, he couldn't help but wish.

They were daydreams, fantasies that could never be allowed to come to fruition. Still, his imagination ran from him, wildly chasing the things that he desired.

He imagined Will within the throes of his heat, aching to be filled, finally allowing himself to follow after his biological instincts and urges. He imagined the words called beneath the haze of heat carrying weight as he begged to be filled to the brim with his seed. He imagined obeying and obliging, knot catching bare as he filled his omega with his seed. He imagined Will's quiet purrs and thanks for such sweet, warm relief as it flooded his womb, sperm meeting egg. He imagined the pride welling in his chest as Will took to his seed so gracefully.

There would be small signs in the coming weeks. A few extra hours of sleep, a few extra trips to the bathroom, small signs of proof just before the confirmation. Will would take a pregnancy test to confirm, and there would be two lines staring back. They would find themselves overcome with joy unlike any other in the presence of two lines, tearful beginnings to some twisted fairytale ending.

He would revel in Will's changing form, adore each expanding inch, mesmerized as his bump began to form. He would hardly be able to keep his hands away, making up for every mistake that he'd made with the adoration in his fingertips. He would kiss the scar that had taken their children away, kiss where the life now blossomed just beneath it. He would give back all that he had taken away, his final grand act of apology in giving Will a child.

Eventually, the time would come when Will would deliver. Hannibal would deliver the child himself, the child born in the same home it had been conceived in, in the very home where it would grow up. He would pull the child screaming from their father's womb and cradle them

tight against his chest before passing them onto Will, allowing the skin against skin, allowing Will to quiet their cries.

He dreamt. He wondered and he wished and he yearned. But his desires stayed unspoken, some things meant only for the corridors of his mind.

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Damp heat gushed from between his thighs as he rolled over, a contented sigh at his lips. They would need to shower, and Hannibal would insist upon washing the sheets after the mess that they had made. Will's lack of slick in the days before heat demanded supplementation by way of copious amounts of lube, and Hannibal never failed to make a mess when prepping him. Not to mention the fact that Hannibal never used a condom unless Will was in heat, when Will insisted upon it. It always a bit of a mess, this time of the month.

But he didn't mind the mess. He didn't mind the warm, wet feeling pooling between his legs, soiling the bedding beneath him. In fact, it was in these moments that Will found himself most content. Sleepy and sated and ready to curl against his alpha for the rest of the night. It was simple. It was domestic. It was easy.

That was what life had looked like for awhile now. Years had passed and easy domesticity had befallen them, some twisted happily ever after falling at their feet. There were no grand acts of betrayal, scars having faded to white, nothing so cruel as what once was. They had grown. They had healed.

He still awoke in the middle of the night screaming with nightmares, but now he had someone to hold him through them. There were still days when he felt broken beyond loving, but there was always someone to remind him of his worth. They had created beauty from the ashes of the life they could've had, creating something all the more worthwhile.

They lay in silence a long while, neither having much to say. In the beginning, Hannibal had never failed to wax poetic in the hazy afterglow of sex, his words beautiful and hard to follow. But as the years ticked by, they grew more content in their quiet, simply learning to enjoy a shared existence.

But there was something different in the silence tonight. It was not that of hazy afterglow of sex and orgasm. It was not contented and sleepy, energy drained from his bones from the release of hormones. It was silence caught in thought, far away from him, mind too far away to touch.

"What are you thinking about?" he asked after too much time had passed.

His head was fogged in his post-orgasm haze when the words slipped out. He hadn't meant for them to, had never even intended for them to see the light of day, never wanted them to escape past his lips, no matter how much he thought about it. He knew Will's answer, knew that he could never trust him enough to ever do anything of the sort, and yet the words still kept coming back to him, over and over in a flood, an army assaulting his mind with nowhere
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to run and nowhere to hide. He had wanted it so much, and he knew that he didn't deserve it, but he wanted it so badly, and finally, the words just escaped past his lips, hanging in the air between them.

"I want you to have my baby."

Will hardly processed his words, it taking him a long moment to even hear and comprehend what he had said. When it finally did register, it took him an even longer moment to find the words to speak, or even know what he was thinking himself. His mouth went dry and his heart began to slam in his chest as the words rang over and over in his ears, hanging in the air for an uncomfortably long period of time, neither of them speaking a word as it echoed through the cabin. A simple statement, seven words, and yet they were so loaded and so full that it felt like a crushing weight had slammed directly against Will's chest.

This wasn't under the guise of heat. This was just Hannibal talking. Sure, under the haze of his orgasm, but he was still Hannibal. Not in his rut, not clouded by a fevered need to procreate. No, this was Hannibal and Hannibal alone. Hannibal Lecter wanted Will to carry his baby. He wanted a family, a family beyond just the two of them. A real family, with a pup running around at their feet, like they had talked about all of those years ago.

A part of Will had died in running away with him. The part of him that had always longed for anything akin to fatherhood, the part of him that valued family above all else, the part of him that longed for a child. He knew better than to breed. He had carried two pregnancies, and yet had no child to show for it. In the years that had passed, he had decided upon this as a blessing. He knew better than to breed and risk the passing on of the nasty traits that he had come to fear the most.

And let alone with Hannibal. What foul, wicked, cunning little thing could possibly be birthed from his loins in the conjoinment of the two of them? Nothing good, certainly. A monster unlike the world had ever seen before. A beast, clawed up from the depths of hell and out of Will's uterus.

But perhaps it would be beautiful, in its own way. Blood stained black against his flesh in the moonlight had been beautiful. The fall into the sea, taken by its waves, had been beautiful. They had made something beautiful in their destruction. Perhaps they could make something beautiful from the act of creation.

He couldn't help but be delighted by the idea of a little girl running around at his feet, with his dark curls and Hannibal's dark eyes, or a little boy with blonde hair like Hannibal's and blue eyes like Will's… A child, tumbling at their feet, calling for their fathers and clinging to their knees with all the wide-eyed innocence of youth. A child that they could raise up as their own, quietly adoring the wicked, beautiful, cunning, brilliant little thing within the walls of their home. Perhaps it could be worth it…

Perhaps it was what they could have had in a different life. Perhaps the girl with dark curls and dark eyes, the boy with blonde hair and blue eyes, the children he'd constructed within walls of imagination, were what they would have had. Perhaps they were the children that had grown within his womb. Perhaps they were symbolic of the life that they could have had

before betrayal and blood and miscarriage. Perhaps the idea was merely symbolic of the life that they could have had before.

Perhaps the idea of them would always be synonymous with the feeling of blood gushing down his thighs. Perhaps the idea of family would always remind him of the kicking within his fourteen-year-old womb in the moments just before forced abortion, the life being dragged from him as he screamed for them to stop. Perhaps the idea of bearing children would always serve as an unwelcome reminder of the children that he had already lost.

Perhaps there would always be an underlying sense of dread. Waiting for the other shoe to drop, waiting for Hannibal to snap and take it all away.

Hannibal could not be trusted. Will would trust him with his own life, but with the life of someone else? Hannibal had used the death of Abigail, the death of their unborn children, in an act of punishment against him. Any child they might have together could be used against him as little more than leverage. Hannibal had loved Mischa. Hannibal had learned to love him. But Hannibal was not capable of the love demanded of fatherhood.

No. Better not to risk it.

Will slipped his fingers through Hannibal's, no malice in his touch. There had been forgiveness, but some trusts could never be regained. Slowly, he guided Hannibal's hand toward his abdomen, letting it rest just above the scar that he had bestowed upon him so many years before. The ever-present reminder of precisely why conception and procreation with Hannibal Lecter was a bad idea.

"I wanted to," he breathed, pain blooming in his chest as he spoke. "But you took them away from me."

He didn't have to look to feel the pain that was undoubtedly sprawled across Hannibal's face. He didn't have to look to feel it in his own chest, to feel the grief that came with the refusal. Grief striking all over again, never fully healed, never fully *fixed.* They had moved past it, learned to live at ease, but had never fully healed. Will doubted he ever would.

Will sat up hard, fingers releasing Hannibal's, the space between them like the vast infinity of galaxies pulled apart. They would come crashing back together, as they always did, but there would be rejection for the night. Perhaps he would take the couch tonight - or Hannibal would insist upon taking it, like the good alpha that he always tried to be. And in the morning, there would be reconciliations and they would be back to easy domesticity. But it would wait until the morning rolled around again.

"I can't."

His voice shook in the two syllables, a hand drifting down over his belly, touching gently at the place where his children had once taken up residence. He could still feel the quickening of life from beneath the surface as a child. He could still feel the life leaving his body as Hannibal gutted him and left him for dead. He could still feel the echoes of traumas that had plagued him throughout his entire life. He could feel the reminders as to why it was best that he make no attempt in breeding.

“I’m sorry,” he said as he rose to his feet, padding across hardwood floors and toward the bathroom. He needed a shower.

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Foolish of him to ask, truly. He had known the answer when the words had spilled from his lips. Will would have never agreed to such things, would have never taken such risks. There could be no blame or hurt feelings in him. He had given Will a rare gift, and stripped him of it. He had committed sins too atrocious to he forgiven in full. To ask him to relive such traumas in the form of another pregnancy would certainly be too cruel.

He listened as the water shut off and Will stepped out of the shower, soft footsteps against cold tile echoing from behind the heavy wooden door. The alpha sat at the edge of the bed, wringing fingers and watching the door. They were going to have to talk about this eventually. He would have preferred it sooner rather than later.

The door swung open, Will standing in a bathrobe, dark curls dripping wet over his forehead. Neither spoke as the omega stepped across the room, taking out a pair of boxers. Hannibal turned his eyes, suddenly feeling all too modest for someone who had just fucked and knotted him.

“I’ll take the couch tonight,” Will stated plainly. There was no malice in his tone, nothing to indicate anger. There was something merely reluctant, needing space away from him. Maybe that was fair.

“I would prefer if you didn’t,” still Hannibal said. He would have much rather talked it out, would have much rather rescinded such foolishly chosen words.

“Look, I’m not mad,” Will sighed, not turning to face him as he rummaged through his clothes, shrugging on a t-shirt. “I just… I can’t do this. I can’t give you this… Not again.”

Hannibal could hear the pain in his voice. The conversation had triggered some painful memory. The loss of their children, the blood spilled from between his thighs as his body rejected the pregnancy. What a cruel and wicked memory for him to draw back to the forefront of his omega’s mind. The guilt welled up in Hannibal’s chest for even bringing it up, for even broaching the subject. He pressed a thumb into the center of his palm until it drew an ache, a silent punishment for his own misspoken words.

He could remember the day that Will confided in him about the child stripped from him in his youth. A forced abortion, pushed upon him by his father when he was still merely a child himself. Hannibal had caught him off guard, eyes catching a glimpse of him curled on the bed, his arms curled tight around his abdomen as he sobbed. Hannibal held him until he settled, until the tears dried and the heaving of his shoulders stilled, until there was nothing left but the occasional sniffle.

He whispered it, his voice hardly able to carry the weight of what had happened to him. It was a pain that had not been voiced in over twenty years, crimes not dared carried from his
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lips. He had been left to mourn the loss of his first child alone, a child that he had felt stir and waken in his womb, a child that had been far more real than the children that Hannibal had taken away.

Pregnancy would only bring about cruel memories of trauma, and Hannibal feared that there would be the eternal fear and threat of losing yet another child. He deserved no such pain, deserved no such agony to be relived. Hannibal would not ask that of him.

“I know. I fear there may have been a lapse in my judgement. I am well aware of the trauma that you have survived,” he said before pausing, taking a breath. “The trauma I have put you through. To ask you to go through such things again would be… Cruel.”

There was a silence, neither caring to speak, or so much as look at each other. There was a pang of guilt against his chest, the knowledge that the things that he had longed for were lost due to his own foolish action. The murder of the children that had once resided within his womb had been his own doing. Will’s aversion to the idea now was of his own doing. The things that he never realized he wanted had been self-sabotaged long ago. There was no changing it.

Still, Will took his place on the bed beside him, allowing his fingers to slip between Hannibal’s. There had been forgiveness in the fall, pasts left beneath the rolling of waves. Their revival and emergence from the waves had brought about rebirth in domesticity and something akin to peace. There was forgiveness for the pain, forgiveness for the scars that stretched across the expanse of flesh. There was forgiveness for almost everything.

The murder of their children, of Abigail, though. They could not be forgiven so easily.

Nor did Hannibal blame him for such reservations in forgiveness. There was regret, remorse for the things that he had done. He had made his mistakes, and there were certain things for which he could never be forgiven. Hannibal and Will had wrapped themselves in some toxic obsession before finding their way toward harmony and domesticity. It had been comorbid and destructive, neither side quite so innocent, not entirely. The pups, and Abigail, though… They had been innocent, and Hannibal had taken them away.

“But you want to,” Will breathed. “Ask me to. You want me to have your baby, and I… I can’t do it. I can’t do it, Han, I’m sorry. I want to, I really want to, but I can’t do it. I can’t do it again, I’m so sorry.”

“Don’t apologize, please,” he protested softly as he found blue eyes staring back toward him, pain lingering just behind them. Another pang of guilt wracked against his chest. “It was selfish of me to ask for such things. I don’t… I don’t blame you, Will. You have no reason to ask my forgiveness when you have done nothing that might demand it.”

The lack of blame didn’t ease the remorse Will felt. Remorse and guilt hung heavy in his chest, tears welling up in his eyes. He didn’t regret his decision, knowing damn well what repercussions a pregnancy would bring with it. But there was pain in the decision to say no. There were things that he wanted and things that he could not give. There were things that he had dreamt of and things that he could no longer have. There was a part of him that longed to

carry Hannibal's children, to build a family with him, but he knew better than to offer such things.

He knew better. He knew better than to say yes. These things that he had wanted for so long would bring too much pain, too much distrust. Another pregnancy would serve only as a reminder of the ones that he had lost, a constant reminder of all that had happened. He could never fully trust Hannibal with a life other than his own. He knew better. He knew better. But it did little to ease the ache that had blossomed through his chest.

"I know," he said, pulling his knees up onto the bed, tucking them into his chest as he rested his head against his knees. "I'm still sorry."

Hannibal's arms slipped around his shoulders, pulling the omega tight against his chest. There was a sadness to come back over them, mourning the things that they had lost, and the things that they could never have. The things that Will wanted to give him, but could no longer allow himself to.

"The child conceived in your youth was ripped from your womb without your consent. The children I placed there years later were taken from you as well. I stripped you of the children I gave to you, and it is my deepest regret. To ask the amount of trust it would take from you is selfish of me. You have no reason to apologize, *mylimasis,"* he murmured, kissing gently at the mess of curls.

The pain exploded raw and hot in his chest, wounds that had never properly healed forced back open with soft words. Blown back open to perhaps heal more properly this time, rather than suppressed until he grew numb to it. As tears streaked hot down his cheeks, he wondered if he would ever heal from what had happened. Will pulled himself against Hannibal's chest, allowing himself to be held, allowing himself to share such pain, allowing himself to hurt so openly for the first time in years.

They didn't speak of children. They didn't speak of breeding. They didn't speak of the children that they had lost, the pregnancies that he had failed to carry to term. They tended to avoid the topic altogether, neither wanting to shoulder the pain that came alongside it. But words that had clung to the tip of his tongue finally slipped past his lips in a moment of passion, and they couldn't be taken back now. All that could be offered were apologies for the pain that they brought.

"I'm sorry," Hannibal breathed. Apologies felt useless now, but there was a necessity. No matter how many times he apologized, no matter how many times he atoned, there were some sins that could never be forgiven. And yet, the words needed to be said, until his lungs ran out of oxygen.

Hannibal felt the heave of shoulders, quiet sobs wracking through his bones as the alpha cradled him tightly, fingers stroking gently through his hair in sincerest apologies. Apologies for what they had lost, and what he had taken away. Apologies for the pain that he had caused. Apologies for the hurt and the agony and the betrayal and the scars left behind. Apologies, apologies.

Will wanted to contain himself, or stand up and hide, or vanish altogether, but instead, he just sat there and sobbed. Clutching his knees to his chest, face buried between them, tears mourning the loss of what they'd had and what they'd lost falling uncontrollably, until Will could barely breathe.

It had been years since the miscarriage. Even more since the abortion. Still, Will could feel them alight in his belly, the feeling of death within his womb as fresh as if it had happened yesterday. He could still feel himself beginning to miscarry, the feeling of blood gushing down his thighs and pooling across the floor. He could still feel the final movements of a dying fetus, kicking and squirming within him, moving against his uterine wall, making sure it was known and alive as it was forcefully scraped from between his thighs. He could still feel it. He could still feel all of it.

Hannibal whispered words that he could barely understand, quiet words of comfort and condolence despite his own pain. Shared pain, empathy shared between them, overtaken with grief as the omega pulled himself into Hannibal's chest. He buried his face into the hair on his chest, gripping there for purchase, clinging to him like he clung to dear life.

Hannibal's fingers stroked through his curls, gentle with him, holding him tight against his chest. He let the heat of tears soak through the skin, claim his blood and bone, mark him with the stains of what he had done. It was regret like none other, remorse clawing at his chest like some wild animal, threatening to break his ribs and through the flesh. And still, he cradled Will against his chest, gentle even in shared agony.

"I'll take the couch tonight, *mylimasis,"* Hannibal offered softly as his tears began to slow.

Will didn't speak. He didn't raise his head, didn't tell him to stay. Instead, he simply nodded, deciding to allow for it. He tucked his knees in tighter to his chest as the alpha's arms loosed around him, pressing another small kiss against his temple. Hannibal, always the gentleman, never allowing Will to take the couch in the midst of their spats. Even when Will was in the wrong, Hannibal always took the couch.

Will inhaled sharply, tucking his face in between his knees, wondering if he was truly making the right call.

Perhaps he had changed. Perhaps they both had changed in the event of their rebirth, pulled beneath the waves and emerging as new men altogether. Perhaps they could have made something work. Perhaps Hannibal had grown more considerate over the years, caring for more than himself. Perhaps he would have made a good father. Perhaps the terrible, twisted, cunning, wonderful little thing that would have been birthed from their union would have been the world's blessing, or its curse, or perhaps it didn't matter because it would have been theirs all the same.

But Will did not voice his thoughts. He knew better than to voice them, rather opting to remain silent as Hannibal uncurled himself from around Will's body.

Slowly, Hannibal pulled himself away, gathering up a blanket and a pillow into his arms before turning toward the door. He couldn't stop wandering eyes from turning back to Will for a mere moment, feeling the grief strike square against his chest.

He left without another word, padding quietly into the living room, sinking into the overstuffed leather couch, pulling the quilt he had knitted himself over his shoulders. He settled in, adjusting to the give of the couch, and adjusting to the weight as Will followed after him and sprawled out over him.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry it's a bit late, but hopefully it was worth it

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

They rarely ventured out together.

It was wiser to not be seen in public together, even after all these years presumed dead. They were less likely to be recognized separate. Their faces had been plastered across televisions and internet in the aftermath of their fall, it was unwise to be seen together. Where one may distantly register a resemblance in one, they were more likely to recognize their faces if seen together. So, as much as it pained Hannibal to never be allowed to show the world that Will Graham was his omega, he ventured out into the world alone, leaving Will confined to the cabin for the day.

It wasn't as though Will had cared to join him to the grocery store today, anyway. He was primarily confined to the bed, sick with fever as the symptoms of his pre-heat began to settle in. He'd been sent for food for the week, to sustain them until his heat passed, and for condoms, having run out toward the end of Will's last heat.

Perhaps this knowledge was what distracted him as he roamed the aisles of the store, plucking up whatever was easiest to prepare and tossing it into the basket on his arm. There would be no time for extravagance in meals when they were both fighting the biological impulses that drove them. This was the only time when Hannibal sacrificed his dedication to aesthetics and good food for the sake of convenience.

What Will had once associated with trauma and rape now was simply part of their lives. The devolution, the frantic thrust of hips, grunts and cries ringing out through their home. Heat was a welcome break from the day to day, abandonment of social expectation of the sake of biological demands of sex and breeding. The nightmares still came more frequently in the days leading up to it, and there was a certain apprehension in the word, but they found ease in it.

Even the discomfort in the days before had come to be welcomed, sleepy days spent beneath the covers, only leaving the bed in case of necessity. Days Hannibal spent pleasuring Will, alleviating the cramps and aches with hands and mouth. Days oftentimes spent denying himself the same pleasure for the sake of release when he finally sheathed himself inside of Will in the first awakenings of heat and slick.

It was routine, like clockwork. Will took off of work for the week of his heat, with the usual addition of at least one day, when the discomfort was too severe to make the attempt of teaching. Hannibal refused to schedule appointments for that week, knowing well enough that there would be no way for him to focus with his omega needing him and his rut overtaking him.

Outside of heat, their life worked still in routine. Hannibal owned a small practice in the village near their home, and Will taught at the university. They at the same time, oftentimes

returning much in the same way. Hannibal cooked dinner and Will tended to the dogs. On lucky occasions, Will would help with dinner in the close quarters of their kitchen, the cabin not offering quite as much space as his home had before. All the same, it was lovely.

Life, for all the struggles and bloodshed demanded of them to get here, was good.

He roamed the aisles quickly, picking up the bare minimum of what would be necessary. He never quite liked to be away from his omega for too long on these days. Something in his own hormones drew a pain in being away from his mate this close to heat. Even if Will still wasn't technically his mate.

There were days when he considered bringing it up. To mark him with yet another scar, aside from the jagged one left across his stomach and the one marked across his forehead. To solidify the bond that had been established on the edge of the bluff.

But he knew better than to ask for such things. Mostly, he feared that the ordeal would end much like the ordeal with asking for a child. Tears, and sleeping on the couch. No, he knew better. Besides, he could be content just the way they were.

Heat to heat, rut to rut, bloodshed to bloodshed. It was a quiet life. Simple, and warm. It was a life that Hannibal had learned to find contentment in. It was nothing that he was in any hurry to change. Especially not at such great risks.

He was halfway through the frozen food aisle when he felt his phone begin to buzz.

Will's face lit up on the screen - a picture taken in a happy moment, a few months after their fall and consummation. Hannibal had just gotten his harpsichord, finally able to move it into the library. Will had sat down to play it, striking keys gently, hesitantly, pulling out a tune, a smile brought to his lips when he'd finally played it right. Hannibal had taken the picture before he'd turned to notice him, one that he cherished with all that was in him.

"Hel-" Hannibal began, quickly interrupted by the heaving of Will's breaths.

"I'm in heat," Will said sharply, without preamble or hesitation. "It just started, it hurts, Han, I need you home."

Hannibal's heart seized in his chest and he nearly dropped the contents of his basket. He had not expected it to come so soon, not expected for another two, three days, at the very least. He was early.

Hannibal hadn't been away from him during heat in nearly 3 years. The last time he had been away had been after a pregnancy scare, when his heat had come late. Will had sent him the store to pick up a test, both anxious at the prospect, though some sliver of Hannibal had been hopeful. He was half an hour away from home when Will called him home, the sudden gush of slick and hollow ache enough of a pregnancy test for the both of them. Hannibal rushed home, to find Will debauched and whining as he fingered himself, struggling to find satisfaction that only his knot could provide.

And for the first time since, he'd started his heat alone.

“Are you okay?” An ignorant question, but the only one he could bring to his lips. The only one appropriate enough to be uttered in a public place, anyway.

“No, I need you. I need you inside of me, Han, it hurts so bad,” he mewled, and Hannibal could faintly hear the wet squelch of slick and the slap of skin on skin. *“Please.”*

“I’m going to check out now,” Hannibal replied quickly. “I will be home in half an hour, and not a moment later. Can you wait that long for me?”

“Do I have another choice?”

Another stupid question. There was little for him to do, little that he was capable of within the confines of social convention, and he was reduced to ignorant questions to which he already knew the answer.

“I’m going to stay on the line, *mylimasis.* I will try to be of more assistance once I am alone, and can speak more freely. I will be at your side as soon as I can be,” he assured, such assurances and promises allowing for little comfort as Will let out a soft whimper on the other end of the line. “Tell me what you’re doing right now.”

He moved distractedly through the self-checkout, quickly scanning what he’d picked up. It wasn’t as much as he had wanted, but now it felt like too much, going far too slowly as he scanned each item quickly, tossing it back into the basket. He could hear Will’s heaving breaths and breathy whines from the other end, his cock beginning to harden obscenely in his slacks.

“I’m fingering myself,” Will said, breath hitching. “Three fingers. I can’t get in deep enough. Doesn’t feel like you.”

“How long ago did it begin?” he asked, swiping his card and gathering his things hurriedly, the machines going agonizingly slow.

“Been horny and uncomfortable all day. Only called when the slick started. I think I soaked through the sheets,” he said, voice coming out in a whine as he shifted uncomfortably.

“Don’t worry about that now, *mylimasis.* You always do,” Hannibal chuckled, even if he was a bit worried as he gathered his things, quickly heading toward the door. Will never retained such clarity in their heats spent together, at least not until he was fucked and sated, and even then he rarely held much of a clear head. Not enough to worry about the sheets. The lack of an alpha must have demanded a sharper focus, forcing him toward the reality of his situation.

“Do I?” Will muttered.

“Did you truly expect our sheets to stay clean during your heat, William? Yes, you soak through. It’s nothing that can’t easily be taken care of.” Hannibal tossed his things into the back of their car, quickly climbing into the driver’s seat as he turned on his speaker.

Will let out a quiet, hummed reply as Hannibal started the car. The alpha felt his cock stiffen, painfully erect in his slacks as he sped from the parking lot. The quiet pants of Will’s breath

over the speaker left him leaking, staining through his slacks. He was tempted to free himself right then, to stroke himself to completion as he drove home, but he knew better than to make such attempts.

“I want you to prop up your legs. Pillows beneath your lower back to create leverage. It’ll allow you to reach deeper,” Hannibal explained, hoping that it would help.

He knew that Will had to be in a great deal of pain, only dulled by fingers and toys but never entirely cured. He could hear it in his whines, could practically smell it. There was a particular scent given off when Will was in pain, a scent that stained pillows and sheets in the aftermath of particularly rough sex, when the omega was left unable to walk straight in the week following. It was a scent that exuded from him in the early morning hours of his heat, on the first day, the scent that jolted him from sleep with an instinct to care for his omega. Hannibal could practically smell it through the speaker of his phone, and it left his cock straining and leaking at the tip.

“It hurts, Han,” Will whined.

“I know, my love. I know,” he breathed. “I’m on my way.”

The noises Will made drove him mad, until his hand was forced down toward his cock, alleviating an ounce of the pressure as he rubbed himself through the fabric. His knot was already beginning to harden, and he knew that he wouldn’t last long before knotting his omega’s hole. Though, he figured, Will would not be needing much in the way of foreplay. All he needed was a knot.

He listened to Will’s whimpers and moans, coaching him through the time spent alone until he pulled up into the driveway. “That’s it, Will. I’m nearly there, I’m nearly there,” Hannibal soothed as his cries grew more and more insistent.

He climbed out of the car, grabbing the bags and rushing toward the door. *God, he could smell it from outside.* The scent was nearly suffocating, his cock lurching in his pants as he fiddled with the keys, stumbling over himself as he pushed the door open. He tossed the bags onto the counter before turning to rummage through them.

“Han?” Will called from the bedroom, a sharp whine drawing his attention.

“I’m coming, *mylimasis,”* he called, rummaging through the plastic bags, fishing for the…

Condoms.

He always picked up a box on his way out, his trip always taking him past the pharmacy on his way toward the door. But through the cries of his omega through the phone, he’d walked right past, hurrying toward the self-checkout without a second glance. Will’s need had made him careless, too distracted to fulfill the task that he had been sent out to do, too focused on getting home to realize what might happen once he stepped foot past the threshold.

Hannibal gripped with white knuckles at the counter, doubling over as his rut began to take him, seizing in his chest. The scent was already secreting from him, and his knot was

throbbing, desperate to be sheathed inside of Will, only spurred deeper into his need by the sounds that came from the bedroom. There was no way that he would be able to make it out of the house, not like this.

Will had been definitive in his refusal, the idea of breeding entirely off the table. But under the guise of heat, Hannibal knew that he would consent to anything. He would greedily accept any offer of breeding, gladly take his seed inside of him, beg to be filled up until the very moment that he came back to himself and realized what had happened.

There was no better alternative, though. He could not simply deny him now. To deny him could leave them both sick, their presence and refusal driving their bodies to revolt until they no longer had control over their minds. This was necessity. They would deal with the consequences later.

He stripped himself quickly before heading toward the bedroom, the door wide open for him to see what lay just beyond. Sights greater than any work of art that the world had to offer him, a vision in the soft morning light that fluttered through the curtains.

Will lay naked and writhing on his bed, fingers stuffed into his greedy hole. Hannibal would have denied himself a moment longer, given himself a moment to watch,would've allowed himself time to watch Will fuck himself on four fingers stuffed greedily into his weeping, gaping hole. His desires were denied, though, as Will jerked up the moment he smelled Hannibal enter the room. The alpha was greeted with bright, desperate, wild eyes. There was a certain primal desire in them, and Hannibal couldn't help but find a certain desperate beauty in his tear-stained cheeks and full-bodied flush.

"Han," Will cried out, a certain relief in his voice before it devolved back into a pained groan. The entire house smelled of sex and painful need. His usual scent was that of lustful want, sweeter than this, but in the beginning of his heat, there was something sharper, something needier. This was so sharp that Hannibal could feel it in his own chest, and in his cock.

He watched as Will groaned, doubling over where he sat, one arm grasping tight around his abdomen as the pain spread through him. He watched as he pushed his fingers back beneath him, leaning back as he forced his fingers back inside, desperately trying to take the edge off of his need. Greedy fingers working back into his dripping hole, rocking desperately into them, the sheets stained and soaked with his slick…

"Show me," Hannibal directed without preamble.

Will obeyed, turning himself over, on his knees with face buried into the pillows, fingers reaching behind to spread himself open. He hadn't had him do this in years, usually waking to Will's heat, merely turning him over as they woke before spearing into him. But this time, he wanted to see. Wanted to fuck him like a proper omega.

Wanted to breed him.

"That's it," Hannibal breathed, stepping toward the bed. At any other time, he might have taken the time to savor him. To work him open with his tongue, savor the taste of his slick on

his tongue. He might have made him beg before being allowed to come again. But this was hardly the time for foreplay.

“Please alpha, please…” Will begged, muffled beneath the pillows. “Mount me, Han, please, just... *God, please fuck me.”*

There was something to be pitied and something to be pined for, something so gorgeous in his desperation. In his *need.* Hannibal watched as slick trickled out of his hole, dripping into the sheets. He pressed two steadying hands at his hips, running down his thighs before pushing a single, testing finger over his entrance. His own cock twitched in sympathy as it pulsed, fluttering and throbbing in an attempt to suck him inside, desperate to be fucked and knotted. He let out a quiet growl, pressing two fingers past his fluttering rim, making certain that he was open enough, wet enough to take his knot.

There was another sting of regret at what he had done, at the mistake he had made as he reached down toward his bare cock. He gave himself a few cursory pumps, slow and undecided, knowing the violation of trust that would come once he pushed himself inside. He knew that Will might never forgive him should he go through with it, should he knot and breed him through his heat, should he come inside of him and force life into his womb…

But the two fingers sheathed inside of Will’s greedy hole, stroking him inside, would soon grow uncomfortable. Will’s whines and pleas were already growing more desperate, aching for a knot inside of him. He could not deny him any longer - to deny him would be too cruel. Nor could he deny himself, knot half-formed and cock leaking and straining at the tip. To deny him, to deny himself, it would be too cruel for either to bear.

“Alpha,” Will mewled, rocking back against his fingers, begging for his attention, begging for his cock…

Hannibal gave himself another cursory stroke, this time more assured. He glanced down at his cock, red and fat and heavy with blood, knot already verging on popping, before pulling out of Will’s greedy hole. He brought the slick-soaked hand to his cock, smearing the fluid down his shaft before lining himself up with the omega’s weeping hole, earning himself the flutter of his rim and the contraction of muscle.

He pushed.

Will cried out in sweet relief as he moved inside of him, bottoming out in one effortless glide. He sunk deep into the hilt, cockhead nudging against his cervix as the alpha draped over top of him, cock sheathed deep inside of him, savoring a moment in their joining.

The pain had nearly overcome him, too much for him to handle, too much for him to bear. Will hadn’t felt such a pain in years now, and his body wasn’t quite what it used to be. Not quite so adaptable anymore. Hannibal had made something insatiable out of him. They’d been through so many heats together now, Will was sent doubling over in pain and mewling like a bitch the moment that he stepped away.

But with him came relief like none he’d felt before. He slipped away from himself, no longer so painfully alert, rather falling into his own pleasure. His mind felt fuzzy, not quite capable

of piecing together coherent thought. His body joined with his alpha's his knot already pressing up against his weeping rim… It was more heaven than hell.

"Alpha," he mewled softly, rocking back against him. He didn't move yet, didn't thrust, the alpha stilled within him. His breathing grew labored, chest heaving as he trembled, thighs tensed. "Please, Han, *move."*

The pressure of Will's body around his cock nearly drove him to tears. In true conjoinment, without restraint and without barrier, Hannibal clung to his lover, burying his face into the side of his neck. Will's scent fell somewhere between pleasure and pain, agony spurred on by his growing need, pleasure brought from the very act of Hannibal's bare cock being sheathed inside of him. He breathed him in, nearly drowning in the scent of him.

It was intoxicating. He pulled out slowly and pushed back in hard, slamming against Will's body with great force, filling the room with the obscene sound of skin against skin. Will's cries grew hoarse, filled with need and relief as his alpha picked up speed inside of him. He had stopped holding himself open, and now simply pillowed his head on his crossed arms as he was rocked back and forth with each thrust. Hannibal could feel the slick leaking around his cock, dripping down Will's thighs, down the fronts of his own.

He was slick and open for him, taking his length inside of him as though he was created for it. And perhaps it was precisely what he was made for. Created to devolve into heat, created to take his knot, created to be bred, created to bear his children. Hannibal let out a low growl at the very thought of it, burying himself deeper into Will's neck, taking in his scent like oxygen. He was sweet, and sharp, and *fertile.*

All that he had wanted in the worst of circumstances. Without condoms, Will would certainly walk away from this heat pregnant, to grow thick and heavy with his brood. To see Will with child, to watch him carry a pregnancy to term, it would be a blessing bestowed upon him by the gods. To bring a child into the world with him, to create life within his womb…

It was no choice he had made, but rather one fate designed and designated. He lacked the self control to pull away, driven too far into his rut, needing it as desperately as Will did. Neither were fit to leave their four walls in pursuit of protection. Where they would go after this was uncertain, but there was one thing that was for sure. Hannibal was going to impregnate Will Graham for a second time.

There was guilt, and then there was not.

"Fuck, alpha," Will whined, rocking back against him, partially muffled by the pillow. "Knot me, breed me, *please.* Please, I wanna be filled up with your pups, *please."*

This talk was not uncommon. Even without intentions of breeding, even with the barrier of a condom, Will always moaned and begged to be filled and impregnated. It was biological urge and instinct, demands made by his heat. His begging meant nothing outside of this haze of pheromones.

And yet, it ignited something in the pit of the alpha's belly. A fire, a growl drawn to his lips as he pistoned his hips and began to thrust harder, more desperately into him. Biological

instinct and the desire to bear witness to the miracle of life grow in Will's belly forced him in deeper as he rose up from his knees. His feet planted steady against the mattress, pushing Will's face into the pillow, rutting down on bended knees as he forced himself in deeper, his knot tugging at his rim.

Hannibal growled low as he pistoned in and out of him, one arm holding Will around the waist for leverage, pounding hard into him. Slick squelched out around him, matting down his pubic hair where it scratched against the sensitive backs of Will's thighs. There was insistence in his movements, desperation, hunger. Starvation.

"You'll carry my brood, won't you, omega?" he growled, teeth biting, tugging at his ear. "It's what you were designed for. To carry my children, to be fucked and bred, to take my knot."

Will let out a mewled yes, rocking up against him, demanding his cock sheath itself in him, demanding to be fucked and knotted and filled to the brim with his alpha's seed. Hannibal was not a cruel man. He would not deny him that.

"I'm going to seed your belly, *mylimasis.* You'll take all I have to give you, take my seed into your womb. I'll fill you so full, I'm going to put a full litter inside of you. You want it, don't you? To be filled with my pups? To carry your alpha's litter?" Hannibal murmured, rocking hard into him, draping over him, breath hot against his ear. "You want to be a good omega, don't you?"

"Please," Will cried out, clinging tightly to the sheets as Hannibal plowed into him, burying himself deep into his weeping hole, as if trying to crawl inside of him to ensure that his seed was planted. Planted, sewn, fertilized, implanting in the lining of his womb to grow and be carried there in the coming nine months. And, in his heat-fueled haze, it was all that Will wanted.

He forgot his worry, forgot the fact that Hannibal could not be trusted with the life of a child. He forgot about the abortion, forgot about the miscarriage, forgot about the children that he had already lost. He forgot about the fear of losing another, knowing that he could not take it if he did. He forgot, and forgot, until there was nothing but the feeling of Hannibal's bare cock sheathed deep inside of him, trying to get him pregnant.

And he would gracefully accept it. He would have begged for it, accepted the role that nature had designated. He would take it in stride, bear his alpha's pups with pride. His alpha would be proud of him, undoubtedly, for carrying his litter. His alpha would care for him all throughout the pregnancy, make sure that he and the pups were well taken care of throughout the entire process of gestation. He'd be healthy and happy and well-fed up until he gave birth, and then Hannibal would be so proud…

Will let out a pitiful whine, rocking up against his alpha's violent thrusts, feeling the knot beginning to tug as he made attempts at pushing past. He reached up behind himself, between his slick-soaked flesh and Hannibal's thrusting hips. He spread himself wider, begging for more, begging for a knot. He wanted it. He needed it.

"Mine," Hannibal growled, gruff and hungry for him, possessive and needing to mark him in whatever way he could.

Would have been easy to mark with teeth and scars and blood, to dig into his mating gland and bond with him. But he knew better, even in his rut-fogged brain, than to even broach that boundary. Instead, he would mark him with his knot and seed. He would mark him in the children stuffed inside of his belly.

"Yours!" Will cried out from beneath him, debauched and wanton in his moaning.

And like that, he was called back to their first time. Will, having come to him with slick leaking down the backs of this thighs, staining the denim of his jeans. Will, shuddering and shaking and taking comfort only in his hands. Will, surrendered fully to him and swearing himself to the alpha in words rather than scars. *Yours.*

Without guilt and without shame, too drugged by his rut to be bothered with anything other than the thought of breeding his omega, he pressed his knot hard against his weeping rim. Will let out a ragged cry, half from pain, half from pleasure, tears forming in his eyes as his fingers dug into the mounds of his own flesh, keeping himself spread for his coming knot. Hannibal showed little mercy this time, none too gentle with him as he pushed deep inside, bottoming out as his knot pulled past his rim.

Hannibal shuddered and came the moment the slick head of his cock nudged against the omega's twitching cervix, flooding his womb with life-giving seed as Will cried out beneath him, hands falling to grasp the sheets. Hannibal let out a groan as he fell lax against Will's body, brutal thrusts turning to sharp undulations as he tried to bury himself deeper, ensuring that he was filled as deeply as he could have been.

Will whimpered and moaned, balls drawn tight to his body as Hannibal's seed gushed inside of him, providing sweet relief that he hadn't known in so many years.

They had always been so careful, on account of Will's demands. Condoms were necessary, the expensive kind that was designed specifically for heat and rut. Will refused him any other way, and always would, up until the very moment he stopped going into heat. But in the moment, too drugged by his own pheromones, he lay weeping for joy beneath him, grateful for each drop of life-giving seed that flooded his womb. His nature no longer denied, his biological demands fulfilled at last…

His cock seized hard, suddenly, and he released.

His come spilled hot onto the sheets beneath him, pooling as his knees gave out and he collapsed in a heap, pulling Hannibal down over top of him. His cock twitched and throbbed against the soiled sheets, dampness spreading warm and sticky around his pelvis. He whimpered and moaned as Hannibal draped over him, soothing his debauched cries with fingers through his curls and soft praises against his ear and more come flooding his womb.

"You've done so well for me, Will," he breathed. "You've taken my seed so beautifully, *mylimasis.* Such a good omega. Such a good omega."

He couldn't help the purr that escaped his chest, a smile breaking from his lips as Hannibal rocked gently inside of him, moving softly against him. It was warm, and it was soft, and Will found himself sleepy and sated and content with his alpha's knot pulsing inside of him.

“Thank you, alpha,” he mumbled into the sheets as the darkness took him and he allowed himself to sleep.

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Will woke to the gush of seed soaking his thighs.

Spilling from his hole as Hannibal pulled out of his body, knot deflated and cock softening. He vaguely registered the feeling, one that he hadn’t felt in years. It was hot and sticky, oozing from his twitching rim, down the backs of his slick-soaked thighs.

His heart seized in his chest at the sensation as he remembered what had happened. Heat never allowed for much logic or reasoning when it took him, but there were brief moments of clarity. Brief moments when he could remember what had happened, what had been done to him, what he had begged for. He could remember Hannibal’s cock inside of him, knotting him raw, filling him with seed with the expressed intent of getting him pregnant.

Oh, god.

“You didn’t,” Will said, voice flat and almost numb. Hannibal stayed silent from beside him, a guilty sort of silence, unsure of how to own up to his crimes. Will could feel his pulse quicken, his heart hammering in his ribcage, hands shaking as he grasped the sheets, burying his face deeper into them. His voice shook as he spoke again, lip quivering as tears gathered in his eyes. “Oh, god, you didn’t. Please say you didn’t.”

“Will…” His voice carried guilt, and shame, and Will knew that there was no denying what had happened, even if he could hardly remember it happening. Hannibal coming home, demanding that he present, waiting until he had devolved too far into his heat to say no. The press of his hard cock into his weeping hole, the relief that came in the glide of flesh against flesh, unobstructed by rubber. His own unrestrained cries, spurred on by biological imperative to take his seed, to be impregnated. Hannibal’s dirty words ringing hot through the air.

And then the gush of seed inside of him. Flooding hot into his belly, filling Will with a sweet relief that he hadn’t known in years. He remembered orgasming to it, purring beneath Hannibal’s weight, not quite understanding what he had so enthusiastically consented to, not quite remembering anything beyond the biological dictates of his fertile and ovulating body. But now, in the aftermath, he could remember everything in too stark of clarity.

His breathing grew heavy, hyperventilation seizing his lungs as he pulled himself up in wide-eyed panic. He absently registered Hannibal’s movements, hands grasping in some attempt to soothe, but Will wanted none of it. Limbs flailed as he scrambled into the corner of the bed, pulling hard away from the alpha, away from everything, curling in on himself as a hand dipped down between his thighs, pressing past his rim and pulling in some desperate, futile attempt to get it out.
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It was too late, though. He knew damn well that it was too late. Hannibal had been inside of him for the better part of an hour, pushing into him deeper, filling him fucking full. God knew that he was probably already pregnant. It was damn well useless now, but even still, he struggled, scooping it out onto the soiled sheets, forcing it out of his body. He had to force it out.

There was so much of it, it didn't matter how hard he tried, how hard he pushed, it wouldn't all come out. He could vaguely remember times when Hannibal had made a mess of his own cock during his heats, fucking into his already-soiled hole in the times before their fall. He always spent days leaking it, days reeking of him, days marked by him. There was no getting all of it out. Pointless. Futile.

The tears came a moment later, knees tucked tight against his chest as he moved his hand from his hole, come and slick dripping from his fingers. He pulled himself tight, making himself as small as possible for the fear of what would come next. For the pain of what had been done to him. For the fear and the hurt and the betrayal and the pain.

His eyes found Hannibal sitting across from him, eyes full of worry and guilt and emotions that Will didn't care to place in his brokenhearted rage. Hannibal moved to reach out, to touch him, to comfort and cradle him in some attempt to rectify for his actions, but he was not to be so quickly forgiven.

"Don't touch me!" Will screamed before letting out another ragged sob, chest heaving as the tears flowed free and heavy, burning in his lungs as he began to rock.

Flashes of what had come before haunted him, pulled to the forefront of his mind with the absolute knowledge that this was what he would have to go through again. Miscarriage and death, whether he wanted it or not. It was necessity, demands of the situation. Hannibal couldn't be trusted with the life of a child, and he and Will were dangerously conjoined. There was no other option for him. This would end in death, and pain, and suffering, all over again.

"Don't fucking touch me," he whimpered, teary-eyed and trembling.

"Will," Hannibal began, unsure of where his sentence would end. In apology? In excuses? In feeble explanation? He was uncertain of what to say, but the look of agony painted across Will's features demanded that he say something.

"You came in me," Will said, voice clogged with tears. "You knotted me bare, you're… You're trying to get me pregnant. I told you no, Hannibal, I told you no, I told you I couldn't, I told you."

Will crumpled in on himself, tears staining his cheeks. Hannibal wanted to reach out, to hold him, to reassure him that it would be okay. That they would sort something out, work through this and find a happy middle ground. Perhaps Will would fall in love with the idea of a child, and they could work through the trauma. Or, if Will could not handle the pregnancy, abortion was still an option, one far less traumatic than the one forced upon him in his youth. A pill taken before any symptoms of pregnancy even arose, a few hours of blood passed into a toilet, and then nothing. Hannibal would force nothing upon him, expect nothing of him. He

wanted to remind him of that fact, explain what had happened, explain that it had been by mere mistake that it had happened. He wanted to hold him tight to his chest, stroke down his curls until the tears ceased their falling.

But Will had made it quite clear that he wanted his distance. Two feet across the mattress may as well have been oceans, leaving Will huddled tight on his little island and Hannibal to pull him back to the mainland. Though, with the tears streaming down his face, it seemed unlikely that he would be able to persuade him to swim back.

“I am… I’m sorry,” Hannibal said, unable to draw anything else to his lips.

“Why did you… Why would you do this to me? I told you no, I told you I didn’t want this.” Will demanded, another hiccupped breath drawn from his chest as the tears fell from his eyes.

“I… I was careless, I forgot to buy the condoms, I… It… By the time I realized, I was already rutting, and… Will, I would never…” Hannibal stammered, words failing him as he struggled to make some sort of amends.

“You would never?” Will hissed, barking out in accusation. “You expect me to believe that you would tamper with my pills and make me start going into heat again, that you would take my sanity away and put me in a prison cell, that you would put a knife through my stomach and a saw to my skull, that you would try to *consume* me, but you would *never* try to take advantage? *This* is where it stops? You would never try and knock me up when I said no? You would *never?”*

Silence fell buzzing over the room, such accusations leaving them speechless and staring. They rarely spoke of life before the fall, rebirth allowing for something akin to forgiveness. Something akin to domesticity, something akin to love and peace and whatever it was that real people had. But his words burned with fire and blame now, no longer so ready to forgive and forget. They burned hot and red and left the room aflame, the two staring silently as the walls burned down around them.

Will could see by the look in his eyes precisely the words that Hannibal was clinging to, though. Words that he had never dared to even speak tumbled from his lips, accusations that he had never made before spilling from his tongue. He’d never been certain of it, had never shot such vicious words without actual proof. The other things he bore proof of in the scars marking his body, but he’d always had his suspicions.

A small manipulation, he would call it. Simple curiosity spurring him to commit such acts against him. Always so damn curious to see what might happen.

He never spoke word of his suspicions, for fear of facing them himself. Everything that he felt for Hannibal - the love, the hate, every wicked and bittersweet emotion that he had found himself addicted to - lay on the line if he dared to linger on those thoughts. Those lingerings of suspicion would eat him alive if he dared to pay them too much mind. Wondering if the bed where they first made love had been built upon lies would be too much for him to shoulder. Lies of anything else could be forgiven, but this…

But he didn’t know. He threw his words in blind accusation, but the moment that they left his lips, he knew that they were true. Something in the way that Hannibal looked at him, dumbfounded and guilty and wounded, it was all the proof he needed. Still, he said nothing, and was just left staring.

“How did you know?” Hannibal finally spoke, his voice just barely above a whisper.

“I didn’t.”

And silence fell again.

Chapter End Notes

hit me with some comments as we watch tumblr go up in flames y'all

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Took a break for the holidays but I'm back y'all!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hours had passed, long enough for the sun to go down and for his heat to sink into full force. Hannibal had been exiled from the room, sent to spend the remainder of his heat to rut into the couch cushions. Little use it did, though. The damage was more than likely already done. Hannibal had knotted him. He was already pregnant.

He could feel it. He didn't know how, but he could feel it. He could feel it in the same way he'd felt it during his two earlier pregnancies. There was some acute awareness tingling in his lower belly, like he could already feel the first burgeonings of life budding within his womb. Psychosomatic, perhaps, but he could have sworn to it.

The room felt too hot.

Will was sprawled out against the bed, three fingers pressed past his hole, other hand on his cock, desperately chasing after some satisfaction. But even as his cock gave a feeble spurt, watery semen painting his chest, he was left aching, sick, unsatisfied. His body knew damn well that this wasn't what was meant to be inside of him. This wasn't what he was meant to be orgasming to, wasn't what he was meant to be fucking himself with. This wasn't a knot.

This wasn't Hannibal.

His mind was clouded, fogged with need, and he could smell Hannibal from the other room. Part of him wanted to bend over and present himself like some wanton slut, beg for his knot, beg for his seed, beg him to knock him up. Then there was the part of him that was still clear enough to know exactly why he didn't. There was part of him that remembered his anger, and his fear, and his agony that came in such betrayals of trust. Part of him that remembered why he couldn't be allowed back inside.

But the biological demands of his body were never ones to obey logic. He knew that he wouldn't make his entire heat like this, would succumb to the fever and fall to his knees, begging his alpha to fuck him like some common whore. Hannibal wouldn't be able to say no, even if he tried, his surrender to his loss of inhibitions being what drew him to knot him to begin with. Neither would be able to withstand the heat and rut for its entirety without the other. It was better to simply get it over with now than to remain in his suffering until he lost what remained of his self-possession.

It held no bearing either way. It didn't matter whether Will held his ground or if he bent over and let Hannibal rut into him a hundred times. What's done was done, and there was no going

back to change it now. Hannibal had already gotten him pregnant. He could feel it.

His orgasm was unsatisfying, nearly painful in how little relief it brought. A sort of clarity, a sort of composure, but there was little give in the actual pain, even as his cock softened against his hip. He drew himself up, hands pressing through sweat-soaked curls as he shifted uncomfortably, against the slick-stained sheets. He was angry - fucking livid, more accurately - but his body still beckoned to Hannibal, still called to him, still ached for him.

It was against his better judgment, but damn better judgement. He tugged himself to his feet, wobbling on shaking knees as he struggled to balance himself. He felt weak, and perhaps he was right. He didn't have the strength to deny himself. It would be for nothing but spite, anyway.

Hannibal lay sprawled against the couch, palming against his cock, rutting against his hand, looking as miserable as Will. Miserable, horny… Guilty.

"You got me pregnant," Will said as he entered the room, standing on swaying legs, barely able to hold himself upright. He wanted to fall as he said it, wanted to fall to his knees and sob. He wanted to claw himself open and leave himself to bleed out on the floor, death being better than such bittersweet things as procreation. "I can feel it. You got me pregnant."

"Will," Hannibal began.

"You knew what this would do to me, Hannibal, you fucking knew it," Will spat, words like fire on his tongue. They burned like fire in his throat, in his chest, through his entire body, until he was lit aflame. "I can't do this again, I can't."

"My love," Hannibal breathed.

"No, shut up, I'm… You… You did this on purpose. How in the hell do you expect me to forgive you for this? How in the hell do you expect me to keep it, after last time? You took the last ones. You ripped them out of me, left them to die inside of me. And the time before that, I felt that baby kick and fight before it was dragged out of me. And now you just want to knock me up and act like none of that ever happened? Hannibal, how fucking dare you?"

The tears flowed unrestrained as he threatened to crumple in on himself, fall to his knees and collapse.

"I know, my love, I never intended to hurt you," he protested, voice softer than what Will figured he deserved. It would have been easier for Hannibal to yell, or for his eyes to go dark in the way that they sometimes did. Anger would have been easier to deal with. Murder would have been easier. "It was a mistake. I never meant to hurt you in this way. Words cannot even begin to express my remorse, my love."

Hannibal rose to his feet, stepping across the room to meet him. Part of him wanted to step back, to pull away, but his brain felt severed from the rest of his body, incapable of forcing his legs to move. Hannibal's hand rose to meet his face, caressing his cheek in the same way that he had just before his blade had cut into him. His body froze rigid with such violent memories, recalling the way it felt just before being left to drown in a pool of his own blood.

Hannibal hadn't been around to bear witness to the PTSD.

He'd been locked behind prison bars, away from him when the symptoms truly began to settle in. Hannibal hadn't seen him wake up from the nightmares, breaths loud as screams, reaching for the gun that he kept tucked beneath his pillow. Hannibal hadn't watched him shoot three, four, five bullets into the wall, aiming into the dark, aiming for the creature that plagued his nightmares, with skin dark as blood in the moonlight and antlers sharp enough to pierce flesh and mount him upon them. Hannibal hadn't been there when Jack had driven him to the hospital after his eighth drinking binge over the course of a month, having found him passed out in the floor, eyes yellow as his liver began to fail him. Hannibal hadn't been there for his nightly games of Russian Roulette over a bottle of whiskey, holding the gun to his head and pulling the trigger each time he took a shot before inevitably passing out on the floor in a pool of his own vomit.

The memories that plagued him them came rushing back, such flashbacks drawn to the forefront of his mind. Memories that he had worked to suppress, memories that he had fought to choke and smother beneath all the good that had come. The memories of blinding pain, tearing straight through the pink line that still stood etched across his flesh, marked with a smile in his stomach. The bile began to rise in his throat before dragging him away, tears stinging in his eyes as he pulled back hard, arms crossing tight across his chest.

"Please don't touch me," he sobbed, voice coming out warbled and shaking.

Hannibal took a step back, hands raised up in surrender, a pained look etching over his face. Such guilt was not something that Will was used to seeing, and yet, he'd been seeing it a lot these days. He had looked so guilty after confessing to wanting a baby, guiltier still after knotting him raw. It was genuine, pained, so fucking sad.

Maybe he believed him. Maybe it was an accident. Hannibal had changed in the years that they had been together. He had become softer, well and truly loved him. He knew better than to do something so purposely cruel, knew better than to risk this wonderful little thing that they had built up for themselves.

But the pain and the fear and the anger persisted. Perhaps motivations and intentions didn't matter all that much. The mistake had already been made, and they would have to deal with the consequences.

Will turned his eyes away, crossing his arms tight across his chest, tears welling up. All that they had would come crashing down. There was no recovering from this, such trauma forced upon him all over again. The nightmares, the panic attacks, the urge to drink himself into oblivion, it would all come rushing back. It would eat him alive.

"Sit down," Will rasped, voice coming out cracked and broken.

Hannibal obeyed without question, taking his place on the couch as Will followed after, steps forced and timid, drawn tightly into himself. He could feel the slick pulse from his hole, dripping down his thighs, the need and urge returning again. He stood reluctant, hesitant of his own actions. But he could already feel it. He was already pregnant. There was no more use in denying himself.

“Don’t touch me. Don’t look at me. I want you to keep your hands behind your back and I want you to look off to the side,” Will demanded, and Hannibal obeyed, hoping that obedience might show his remorse.

Will inhaled sharply, and took a step closer. He propped a knee on the couch, and the other, straddling his alpha’s lap before reaching between his legs, leveling himself with Hannibal’s cock. The head nudged against his hole, and a gagged sound escaped his throat, a sob just barely contained. His breathing grew ragged, eyes brimming with tears, but still, he remained.

“Will, no,” Hannibal protested, eyes turning to face him.

“Look away,” Will demanded, voice coming out just below a scream, shaking and straining and rasping as he shook.

“Will, stop, you don’t-”

“I’m already pregnant, I can feel it. We shouldn’t… We don’t both need to fucking suffer through the rest of this. It’s done.” He choked on his own breath. “It’s done.”

“Will,” Hannibal breathed, his name like a prayer on his tongue, begging for mercy, begging for forgiveness. Will was not a wrathful god, but there were certain sins that could not go so easily forgiven.

“Just… Shut up, and turn your head, please,” he begged.

Hannibal stared up with pleading eyes before finally turning away, giving him whatever he wanted, whatever he needed, whatever he demanded. Hands behind his back and eyes averted.

Will’s eyes clamped shut, imagining himself far away from here as he let himself sink down, adjusting to the feeling of fullness. Full to bursting, filled in familiar ways, filled in the only way that could satisfy, even as it drew a ragged sob to his throat. He could remember the blood-soaked thighs and the torn sheets. He could remember the screams ripped from his throat as he begged for them to stop. He could remember the tear-stained pillows and the filth that stained his skin…

The tears stained his cheeks as he began to rock. His body took control, moving on instinct, fucking himself down on his alpha’s length. His movements were jerky, uncoordinated as his fingers dug into Hannibal’s shoulders, nails forcing themselves deep into the flesh as he struggled to steady himself. He could feel the blood spring up beneath his nails, hot and damp against his hand as Hannibal let out a hiss in pain.

“Mylimasis,” Hannibal breathed, and Will could feel him move, feel his eyes on him.

“Shut up,” Will ordered, demanding he stay silent.

“Will, please,” Hannibal begged, begging for his attention, begging for something more than closed eyes and a desperate attempt to forget who was beneath him. “Just look at me, please,

my love.”

With a shaky inhale, he looked.

Hands looked to be held up in surrender, though such simple gestures held greater meaning. The night he came to him in heat, with tears streaming down his face and memories threatening to drown him, those same hands had offered themselves up. Soft comfort in the palm of his hand, holding tight to him, offering him gentle control from the point of vulnerability.

“Hold my hands, Will,” he said.

Will let out a ragged sob before allowing himself to reach up, lacing his fingers through Hannibal’s, familiar palms pressed against his own. So much more tender than what he had earned, far more gentle than what he had expected of him. Screaming accusations had hardly warranted such care. He gripped tightly to his hands before leaning in, burying his face into the crook of Hannibal’s neck.

The tears flowed unrestrained as his hips snapped forward, uncoordinated and jerky as he moved, clinging to his alpha for dear life. The pain ripped through his chest, nails biting into skin as he was overcome and overwhelmed by the tears.

There were tears in Hannibal’s eyes, too. Tears of remorse, of regret, of apology, pain welling up within them. Such bittersweet agony.

Hannibal drew their locked hands up to his lips, kissing at Will’s fingers. Gentle kisses pressed against his fingertips as Will’s tears grew louder. Such gentle gestures would linger across his flesh into eternity, and he feared life without them. He feared a life doomed to live without such bloody domesticity, without the life that they had built up for themselves. A cold and lonely life indeed.

There was no going back after this. There would be no way to return to such a life they had before. The panic and the terror would return, and whatever semblance of strength he had mustered would come crumbling down beneath the weight of a child growing within his womb.

He would have no choice but to run. But for now, he would stay.

The pleasure did not mount in the way it typically did. All sensation felt far away and secondary, hardly noticed as he moved. The occasional moan or spike of pleasure shot through him, the wet sounds filling the room as Will bounced up and down on his cock, chasing after orgasm, but it was hardly satisfactory. Any pleasure that might have been derived felt smothered and drowned by tears, even as he came and seed spilled between them.

Hannibal’s orgasm followed quickly after, knot catching at his rim and the damp warmth spreading through him, drawing another ragged sob from his chest, squeezing tight against his hands. He cursed him for the feeling, the reminder, the ensuring of his insemination. Hot tears spilled against bare flesh, trembling as he sobbed.

“Oh, *mylimasis,”* Hannibal whispered through his own warbling tears, a hand slipping from between Will’s fingers, reaching up to stroke through his curls, gentle and soft and warm.

Such soft words drew another sob from his throat, arms thrown around his neck as he clung tighter to him, fingers pulling through his hair as he struggled to understand why.

“Stay with me,” Hannibal murmured, breath hot against his neck.

“Where else would I go?”

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The scent of heat was faded on the sixth day.

It had been fading since the fourth day, with their sessions few and far between, as his heat came to an end.

It was a painful system that they had come up with, but he supposed that it worked well enough for what they had. Will came in whenever he began to feel the need come again, that familiar draw in his belly that forced him back into his alpha’s arms. They were teary conjoinments with Will on top, taking his pleasure, allowing for Hannibal to knot him. Moans and pleas were replaced with painful sobs wracking against their chests, clinging to each other for dear life until Hannibal’s knot deflated. Then he would rise to his feet, clean himself up, and return to the bedroom, where Hannibal was no longer allowed to follow.

He suspected that Will had fled sometime during the night.

It had remained unspoken, but he was certain that this had been their goodbye. There was no returning to what they had before. Such acts of accidental betrayal would tear them apart.

He rose to his feet, the floor cold against them. The entire house felt engulfed in ice, such cold loneliness to leave him to freeze.

He would freeze, return to ice and stone, to the days before he knew Will Graham. He would be damned to walk the earth alone, cold and alone.

The silence was deafening, a silence that would echo through the halls of their home until the end of his days. He would wander these halls, chasing after the ghost of his lover. The sounds of his laughter and his tears, of his moans and his pleas, of his clicks and whistles for the dogs, would echo until his mind slowly forgot them, no matter how tightly he grasped for them.

He felt cold.

He was certain he was alone until he pushed open the door to their shared bedroom, fully expecting to find an empty bed. Perhaps a note would lay amongst the pile of sheets, something to cling to as Will disappeared, another ghost to haunt his memory palace.
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But instead, there lay a sleeping mass, turned away from him beneath a heap of covers. He stalled, waited, and watched until he moved, the gentle inhale proving that he was real.

A sob was drawn from Hannibal's throat, such unadulterated joy spilling from his eyes as he collapsed to his knees. He had stayed. He was here.

He could still leave, and perhaps he still would. Perhaps he would abandon him somewhere down the road, leave him to freeze. But for now, he had chosen to stay. And every moment he had to spend with him still would be counted as a blessing.

"Han?" Will said, his voice grogged with sleep as he turned to face him.

Another ragged sob was drawn from his throat, burying his face into his hands, shoulders trembling with the force of his cries.

"Han, what's wrong?" Will asked, legs swinging off the side of the bed, stepping toward him before falling to his knees before him, taking his face into his hands.

Such tenderness had been foreign in the past days. Such care had been replaced by pain and rage and distance and misery. Now he handled him with care, holding him so gently, as though all betrayal had been forgotten. Hannibal collapsed into a heap against him, tears staining against his chest as Will's fingers pressed through his hair, soothing his tears.

"You're here," Hannibal whispered against his chest, pressing his ear up against him, listening to the beating of his heart.

"I'm here," Will echoed softly, hands pressing through the alpha's hair, holding him close to his chest. "I'm here."

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The nightmares had returned.

They slammed against his cranium, echoing around the bone arena of his skull. Blood and moonlight and sex and teeth had taken on new connotations, no longer things to be feared but rather things embraced. For years, such bloody dreams had not troubled him. They had become welcome, pleasant even.

But nothing could change the connotation of rape. Nothing could change the greasy old men who had pinned him to his own bed, rutting and humping until they got their fill, not caring about the pain and the tearing and the blood that spilled between his thighs. Nothing could take away the fear that reverberated through his bones with such cruel memories.

He woke with screams on his lungs. The third nightmare in as many days.

The only thing that seemed to quiet them was the whiskey. Enough to leave him piss drunk in the evenings before he passed into a dreamless sleep. It was what had gotten him through the first two weeks. He only decided to stop when he started to notice the worried expressions on
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Hannibal's face. Though Will couldn't quite determine whether such looks were of concern for him or for the baby. Maybe both.

He didn't like those looks.

He couldn't quite decide which moment it was that he settled on staying, if he had truly settled on staying at all. He lived on a moment to moment basis now, not quite sure what he wanted anymore. He let Hannibal close to him, let him look, let him touch, pretended like nothing had ever happened, struggling to find some semblance of normalcy.

But it wouldn't last, and he damn well knew it. The PTSD would overcome him and he would succumb to nasty habits. A pregnancy couldn't be ignored much longer, once the tests started coming back positive and the morning sickness started up. Once the bump started to form beneath his clothes and kicks began to draw his attention. This balancing act could only last for so long, and soon, the wire was going to snap.

There was still anger. There was still the overwhelming feeling of betrayal. There were scars that had been split open again as they waited for confirmation. It would be another few days before they knew for certain, but Will could already feel it. And with such knowledge, it felt as though the blade had sunk into his flesh again.

But he stayed. And he stopped drinking, and he started having nightmares. He allowed Hannibal back into his bed, allowed his arms to wrap around him when he woke up screaming. Their conversations grew quieter, and the house was nearly silent more often than not. There was no pluck of keys on the harpsichord, no music to fill their household. They both knew that it was coming. There was no denying it. They just sat and awaited the fall.

So he woke again with screams on his breath, knees tucked into his chest and face buried between them. His chest heaved, fingernails biting the backs of his legs, dragging deep enough to draw blood as the tears blurred his vision.

Hannibal's arms wrapped around him, holding him tight, lips pressing against the back of his neck until his body relaxed, until he eased against his grip.

He went quiet as he curled up into Hannibal's lap, allowing himself to be small. He felt small these days, such stark independence that he had held to feeling stripped and abandoned now. He allowed himself to lean against Hannibal's chest, burying his face there, listening to the soft beating of his heart.

"You're safe, Will," Hannibal soothed, fingers brushing through his curls. "You're safe. I won't let the bad men touch you again."

Will nodded, clinging tighter, all the while wondering if Hannibal stood among the bad men he vowed to protect him from.

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He woke to a silent house, and knew.

He knew it before he opened his eyes. He knew that he was gone, knew it from the emptiness in his bed. There was no weight, no movement, no rise and fall of his breaths. There was only silence.

He opened his eyes slowly, reluctantly, to find the closet door hanging open. The flannel that so typically hung beside his three piece suits were all gone, hastily taken down from their hangers, undoubtedly stuffed into a bag and hauled away.

It took all that was in him not to cry out in agony.

Hannibal rose to his feet, and the floors felt cold again, like ice against the bottoms of his feet. His eyes found the window, and noticed that Will's truck was gone.

The tears began to well up. Gone without a word, without so much as a goodbye. He supposed that it didn't surprise him. They were never very good at goodbyes.

Perhaps he feared the fallout. Perhaps he feared the tears that would inevitably fall. Perhaps he had feared what Hannibal might do to him, fearing that he might become so viciously cruel to him again. Perhaps he feared bloodshed, perhaps he feared that he might do the same thing that he had done to Abigail, opening him up along the scar that he had placed across his belly.

Perhaps it was his own fault.

He wandered through the halls silently, listening for some sign of him, knowing that he would find nothing more than ghosts. Echoes of him, far away and distant. His laughter would grow cold and grey, like the striking of the keys of a piano, with only the quality of a memory.

Hannibal found himself in the bathroom, standing against cold tile, eyes finding the sink.

A plastic pink and white stick sat on the edge.

He brought it closer to his face, struggling to see through tear-blurred eyes, only to find what he already knew. Two lines stood prominent, definitive in their ruling. Will Graham was pregnant.

Beneath the test sat torn paper, likely the test's packaging. On it was scrawled a messy note, dotted with tear stains.

I'm sorry.

Chapter End Notes

Hit me with some love?

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

> Two years in the making. From the original write, to the massive hiatus, to the really long editing process, to the complete rewrite of the second half, she's finished. Goddamn. Enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal didn’t search for him.

His love had been selfish, his love had been cruel. His love had been violent and bloody, and it had frightened Will so much that it drove him to run. The thing to break him had been a mere mistake, accidental and cruel betrayal driving him to flee. So he offered up one selfless act, one grand gesture of love that could parallel none other.

He let him go.

He counted the days since he’d left. He let his fingers strike the keys of the piano stored in the basement, neglecting the harpsichord for the sake of a gloomier sound. The house grew colder, leaving him frostbitten as he returned to the ice and stone. He now stood so far from the man he had once been. Operas and bloody dinner parties now brought no joy, and he took no pleasure in his place above men, unable to truly be apart of the world around him. Will Graham had been his counterpart, gods among men, having walked the world alone before stumbling upon each other. And now, like the gods of old, he would consign himself to a lonely death, slowly taken back into the stone.

And he would consign himself to such a fate, a fate worse than death, a fate worse than the cage, a fate worse than hell. At least there, there would be some form of torment, whether from the prison guards or from the devil or from God himself. There would be something to rebut against, to taunt and to laugh at as the pain pricked against the flesh. But there was nothing to blame here, nothing to taunt here, nothing to draw toward the brink. There was only silence. There stood only the quiet, silent as the tomb.

He oftentimes wondered where Will had escaped to. Perhaps he fled to more familiar territories, returning to the places where he had followed his father growing up. Louisiana had been regarded as home, a house in New Orleans the place where they had always returned to, but they never stood stagnant. Perhaps he would return to the boatyards of Biloxi or Greenville, or the shores of Lake Erie. Perhaps he would build up a life for himself, under false names and false pretenses. Perhaps he’d open up a garage, return to fixing things, tinkering, channeling his appetite for blood into the parts of machines until his teeth began to itch.

Hannibal wondered if there would be a family to replace him one day. Perhaps not so soon, only four months having passed. But perhaps one day he would find someone to replace him. Perhaps he would find something more akin to domesticity than what Hannibal could offer him. Someone kinder, someone less cruel to him, someone who could care for a family, even if it was a makeshift one of dogs and strays.

Hannibal decided on the second day after Will's departure that he had no reason to believe that the child he had placed in Will's womb was still alive. He would seek out an abortionist to take the monstrosity from his loins, destroy the source of his pain as soon as he possibly could. Another pregnancy terminated before it could be carried to term, this time the child at Will's mercy, the death of their unborn child brought about by its father's choice rather than forced upon him.

Or, perhaps, if not brought about by an abortionist, perhaps it was brought about by an alcohol binge. Even before he left, he had been attempting to drink himself into oblivion, passing out with whiskey on his breath every night. It was unlikely that a baby could survive under such conditions.

He accepted it. He accepted this new life, consigned himself to the silence, consigned himself to the chasing of ghosts through these empty halls. Still, it ached to think about. One petty mistake, one momentary lapse in judgement, and all that he held dear was stripped from him.

He supposed it was what he deserved, though. Men like him were not meant for happy endings.

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He loaded his revolver before tucking it into his waistband and turning to the mirror. Four months had been spent in shitty motel rooms, contemplating the uses of such a weapon, and wondering if he was truly putting it to its best use.

He decided that he was, and resisted the urge to return to his nightly games of Russian Roulette. There were plenty of urges that he found himself resisting these days. He resisted the urge to blow his own brains out. He resisted the whiskey on most nights, though there were still rare occasions when the bottle won him over. He resisted the urge to shove a coat hanger between his legs and get it over with himself, destroy the thing that was destroying his sanity. But he resisted, knowing that it wasn't the child growing within him that brought on the nightmares.

He tracked them down. Every last one of them.

He traveled beneath false names, false pretenses, under hoods and shadows. He had a collection of false ID's, and knew to keep his mouth shut. He never stayed in one place more than a week, just long enough for him to track them down and strike when they were alone. He used an old-fashioned revolver, like the one that his father used to shoot bullets into the wall whenever he needed to express a little rage. He struck quietly and quickly, without mess and without warning, a ghost lurking within the shadows, ready to exact righteous vengeance.
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The nightmares settled a little more with each bloody end. Seventeen men dead, the father of his first child undoubtedly among them. Old men with wives and livelihoods, dead within an instant for the sins they had committed lifetimes ago.

There stood only one left.

He knew what was coming to him. How could he not? The obituaries would have drawn a straight line toward him, ticking off his old buddies one by one, until he was the last one standing. He knew he had it coming. Perhaps he had already resigned himself to such a death.

He zipped up his coat, something he had taken to doing as the months ticked by and his midsection started to thicken, and headed toward the door. The January wind bit at his cheeks, but he paid it little mind as he hopped into the driver's seat of the rusty stolen pickup that he'd been driving since the plane had landed, and started down the familiar roads leading home.

The diner where he used to spend afternoons doing homework and sipping on Coca-Cola still stood where it once had, though it had been long abandoned, standing as a nearly eerie reminder of what once was. His hands tensed around the wheel when he passed the place where the clinic used to stand, now just an empty lot, remembering how it felt as his father pulled up as he doubled over, arms curled tight around his bump. There was the cinema, where a beta girl gave him his first handjob while they watched Independence Day, where he'd escaped to the bathroom to sob afterward, though it had been demolished and turned into an AT&T store. Mama Rose looked to still be in business, though, the psychic who he'd visited with his first real girlfriend as a joke, the woman whose bright eyes went cold when she touched him, as though she'd seen all of the horrors and all of the ghosts that haunted him.

It was all so different these days. Steering clear of a place for a little over two decades would do that. Time ticked forward, life moved on without him, even if the image that stayed in his head remained frozen in time. The town where he grew up forgot about him, another face among many, barely a blip on its radar.

And then there was the house.

The house stood unchanged, unmoved, only older now. Falling rapidly into disrepair, standing as old and decrepit as the man that lived inside. Some of the wooden boards appeared rotted away, vines snaked up the side of the house, the yard succumbing to the thistles and the weeds.

He pulled into the driveway, remembering when he had been in the passenger's seat. There were good nights, when the manager at the old diner drove him home to spare him the walk through the cold. There were nights when his stomach twisted up in knots, fearing what the old, drunk bastard might have to say when he walked through the door.

Will made no effort of hiding his presence. He shut off the car, and slammed the door behind him before making his way up to the porch, reaching for the spare key that sat beneath the faded lawn gnome, though it quickly proved unnecessary. The door stood unlocked, his father waiting for him to come home.

“Evening, Billy,” his father called from the living room, sitting in the same chair where he always sat, the once bright red recliner long faded now.

Will cocked his gun.

“I fucking hate it when you call me that,” he said, and aimed.

Reruns of Wheel of Fortune blared over crackling speakers, the only light coming from the TV. It was a place frozen in time, almost as though he had never left. There were some things, he supposed, that were doomed to remain constant, routine and monotony stretching out into eternity, at least until something came along to change it.

“Come to kill your old man, eh, then?” he asked, almost nonchalant, not caring enough to beg for his life. Maybe there was simply nothing left for him to live for. “Shoulda known you’d come calling. Always knew there was somethin’ not quite right in that pretty little head of yours. Knew that this day would come since I saw your face on the news. Run off with that Lecter character. Hannibal the Cannibal. Where’d he ever end up?”

“Home.”

“Home… Y’all are livin’ together now, are you? So I got a bitch male, but a faggot too? Got two for one, I see,” his father teased, tested, knowing damn well what it was he was doing. Will stood stone-faced, knowing better than to engage him. He liked to tease and tear and bite, but Will had learned pretty damn quick that he got bored easily.

And bored he got. His testing eyes stared up at Will for a long moment, daring him to fight back. Daring him to yell, to bite, to tear him apart to bits. To scream, to cry, to run upstairs to lock himself in his room. But Will stood with stony eyes, and he turned back to the television, giving a small scoff.

“You gonna do the same thing to me, then? Chop me up and cook me? Serve me up for dinner?”

Will chuckled. “Han would be appalled if I brought you home. Meat’s no good. Too old. Too dirty. Too drunk. He’d be able to tell what kind of bourbon you like just from the taste of your liver.”

The old man laughed and brought his glass to his lips, as though Will’s mention of it reminded him of what was in his hand. “Kid, you could get drunk yourself after eatin’ my liver.”

He paused, and took another drink. “So that Lounds woman was tellin’ the truth. I raised up a killer.”

“You talked to Freddie Lounds?” Will asked, eyebrow cocked. She hadn’t been above snapping a picture of his colostomy bag, so he supposed that tracking down his father for an exclusive interview wasn’t exactly beneath her.

“Yeah, kinda a bitch,” he huffed, something akin to laughter in his voice.

Will gave a small shrug and a nod. Couldn't exactly argue with him there.

The old man gave out a sigh, downing the rest of his bourbon before pouring himself another glass. "Anyway, can't say I'm surprised. Shit I did to you, it's a wonder you didn't start whacking us all off sooner."

Will didn't speak, and rather watched. Suddenly, he wasn't the monster that lurked in his closet and beneath his bed. He wasn't the drill sergeant that would point a gun at his head at the slightest of infractions. He wasn't the dealer capable of pawning off his body parts to be used by old men. He was just an old man, shriveled up and useless, flicking through channels and downing cheap bourbon.

"How many ya killed?" his father asked, in genuine curiosity.

"You know how you used to brag about all the zips you killed in Vietnam?"

He nodded slowly.

"More."

He whistled, and took another sip. He seemed almost impressed, more than anything. Such atrocities were what it took to make his father proud of him. He couldn't quite say that he was surprised, though. Evil men could only appreciate evil deeds.

"So what now? Gonna put a bullet through my head, splatter my brains across the walls? Like you did to all the others?"

"No," Will said, taking a step closer, footsteps quiet as the grave. "No, you don't get a bullet, that's too quick. After the hell you put me through, I want you to taste the flame." He looked down upon the old man with piercing eyes, hungry for something more satisfying than bullets as he tucked his gun into his waistband. "No. I want to kill you with my hands."

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Across back roads and freeways, over rivers and oceans, through cities and forests, he would always find his way back home.

He was eighteen weeks pregnant by the time he found his way back to the doorstep. The home that he had abandoned stood as it did the day he left. The sun was setting in the west, the sky alight with oranges and pinks above him as it dipped behind his home. It had been rising when he'd left it, creeping ever so quietly over the horizon. Sunrise to sunset, they had come full circle, and it was time to come back home.

Part of him contemplated whether it would be appropriate to return, if he had any place here anymore. Leaving with hardly a word, a scribbled note in a frenzy being the only sign of him left in the house, it was cruel.
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He tried not to blame himself for it. He'd sobbed for nearly an hour as his eyes found the second pink line, assuring him that he was, indeed, pregnant. There had been no more denial, and what fragile strength he'd mustered came crumbling down, slipping like dust between his fingers as he clutched his knees to his chest.

He decided then that he wasn't angry at Hannibal anymore. There was fear, trauma, hints of betrayal still lurking at the corners of his mind, but he wasn't angry. Perhaps that was why he couldn't bring himself to say goodbye.

There were people who deserved his wrath. Cruel and violent people, vile men who would take advantage of a child without the ability to fight back. Bad men who still visited him in his dreams. There were men who had earned the fates that had been dealt to them, men who earned the bullets that pierced through their skulls. They were the real sources of his nightmares. They were the ones who deserved every last bit of what they got.

Hannibal, though, stood not among them, but beside him. Cradling him through the nightmares, calming his nerves with Lithuanian lullabies, rocking him back to sleep. Hannibal had his fair share of evil deeds, from the knife to his stomach to the saw to his head, but after the fall, there came peace. There came a change in him, and his violent deeds and violent delights turned to the rest of the world, and Will took his place beside him.

What had happened had not been a malicious strike against him. Will could feel the remorse, the guilt, the pain in him. It had been an accident. A careless slip had brought life into his womb for the third time in his life, but this time, there was no cruelty behind it.

And Will found himself growing fond of such happy accidents, falling in love with the child that grew within him. He fell in love with it, despite the nightmares, despite the anger, despite the pain. He allowed it to grow and blossom inside of him, allowed it to take root within his womb, allowed himself to love it.

His hand drifted down to rest over his belly, hidden mostly by his jacket, cradling the bump that was beginning to form. It wouldn't be long before he could no longer hide it, until there would be no denying or momentary lapses of memory. Though, perhaps that was okay.

"Welcome home, baby," Will whispered to himself.

Will raised a trembling hand to the knocker, allowing the noise to reverberate through him. He still had the key on the keychain in his pocket, alongside the keys to his car, and the car he'd stolen in America, and a small silver weiner dog that he had crafted himself one summer, years ago. He could have walked in and gone to bed, act as though nothing had ever happened, but it seemed ill fitting. Rude, even.

He heard the skitter of paws across the wooden floor, and smiled. Barking and whining greeted him from the other side, almost as though they could smell that their master had returned home. Behind them followed a more human set of footsteps, bare feet padding across the familiar wooden floors.

And the door swung open.

The dogs came rushing out, jumping up to greet him, soft fur meeting his fingertips as he instinctually fell down to his knees to greet them, as though nothing had ever even changed.

“Will.”

His voice was uttered, something just above a whisper, calling his eyes back up toward the man standing above him, staring at him with teary eyes. It was almost as though he didn’t quite believe what he saw, as though the man on his porch was nothing more than another cruel trick of the mind.

Will rose back to his feet, standing to meet Hannibal’s eyes, a half-hearted smile etched across his lips. Such bittersweet reunions, painful and joyous all at once.

“Hi,” Will said.

“Is it…” Hannibal’s voice trailed off, fingers reaching up to touch, hesitantly reaching out, as though he might vanish before his eyes should his fingertips meet the flesh.

Will reached up to meet him, taking his hand in his own and drawing it to his lips, pressing a kiss against his palm, inhaling him slowly. His scent was sweet and warm and familiar, like home.

“It’s me. I’m here. I’m home,” he breathed.

Hannibal made a noise unlike any he had any heard from those lips, somewhere between a laugh and a sob as he fell forward, collapsing into his arms, clinging to him like his entire world depended upon it, as though a hurricane might rip them apart if he dared let go. The tears stained hot through his clothes, dripping down against his flesh as tears perked up in his own, clinging to the alpha just as tightly as his knees threatened to give.

There were certain things he didn’t realize he had missed so desperately until he had them back. Hannibal’s arms thrown tightly around him, fingers stroking through his curls, clinging to him like he was all that mattered. The scent of him wrapped around him, that scent that he fell asleep to, the one he woke to, the one that had been missing from his bed and his clothes for all these long months. There were certain things that couldn’t be fully appreciated until he’d learned to live without them.

“Mano meilė, mano meilė,” he sobbed, burying his face into the crook of Will’s neck, inhaling him slowly…

He stilled, his sobs and words of adoration silenced, and Will knew why. Some things had not quite stayed the same since he’d left - his scent being one of them.

“You’re… You’re still…” Hannibal breathed, pulling slowly away, eyes glancing up and down his body.

Will gave a small smile before reaching to unzip his coat, revealing the bump that had started to form just beneath his clothes. He reached for Hannibal’s hand again, guiding it downward,

allowing him to feel. Another joyous sob was drawn up from his throat as he fell into his tight embrace, keeping his hand pressed up against his belly.

“Oh, my love,” Hannibal murmured, pressing kisses up and down his neck. “Where did you go?”

“It’s a long story,” Will said, a small smile twitching at the corners of his mouth. “But I don’t think we can go back to the states any time soon.”

Hannibal let out a small laugh, before pulling tighter to him, his tears running hot down Will’s neck, against his mating gland, still unmarked and unclaimed. He had never allowed Hannibal to sink his teeth in, to bind them, had never put so much faith, fearing the responsibility to such ties. Though, now, it wasn’t looking so bad.

“Let’s go inside,” Will coaxed softly, and Hannibal nodded, leading the way past the threshold, into the home that they had shared all these years. It smelled the same, like dogs and pine. It was still warm inside, still as inviting as it had ever been. He clicked his tongue, and like he had never even left, the dogs obeyed, following them in, chasing at their heels.

Will stepped closer to him, not wanting an inch of space between them. He wanted to be absorbed, to hold him so tightly that there would be no telling where one ended and the other began. He didn’t want to let go.

“Han,” Will breathed, drawing closer to him.

“William,” Hannibal said, his name spoken with such utter reverence, as though it had not left his tongue since the day he left.

“I’m sorry.” Will’s voice shook as he spoke. Will could sense it, the energy that had filled this house for the past four months lingering in the walls. Will had seen him smug, and arrogant, and vengeful, and joyous, and dissatisfied, and in love, but rarely so sad. Sadness was not such a common emotion for Hannibal, but the house felt drenched in it, as though it was the only emotion that had saturated these walls since he left.

Hannibal took a step closer, cupping Will’s face in his hands, forgiveness in his eyes. True forgiveness, forgiveness only known by men. God’s forgiveness was vengeful and cruel, and once, Hannibal’s had been much in the same. Will had taken after such cruel practices in his forgiveness, too, but all such cruelty had been lost to the sea, and now there was nothing but forgiveness in the way that man forgives. Patient, and expecting nothing in return.

“My love, you’ve returned to me,” he breathed, thumb swiping away his tears. “It is all that I could ever ask for. Whatever it was, wherever you went, you walked the road you had to. I regret only that I could not walk it with you.”

“I…” Will sniffled, teary-eyed. “I killed my father. I killed all of them. Every one of them that ever touched me, I killed them. That’s why I left. That’s where I went.”

Hannibal fell silent, and there was something between disappointment and pride that filled his gaze. Disappointment that he would kill without him, that he was not allowed to bear

witness to such glorious acts, but pride in his healing.

“I only wish I might have watched you in such glorious transformation,” he sighed, drawing him close enough to kiss his forehead before pulling away, eyes and hand returning to his bump. So much had changed since he’d left. His body had shifted to accommodate another life. He had conquered the demons that he had fought to suppress, at last slaughtering them rather than attempting to confine them to the cages he’d constructed within his memory palace. He had changed, and Hannibal had not been there to witness it. “Such glorious transformation.”

Will gave a quiet chuckle, taking a small step back to admire his bump. He hadn’t truly allowed himself to look, to admire, to do anything but hide it for the sake of avoiding the pain. What love had blossomed within him for this child came tinted with the pain of missing its father, aching for his alpha. But now…

“You didn’t miss that much,” he said, a hand resting over his bump, Hannibal’s resting next to his own. “Mostly a lot of puking. So much puking.” His eyes returned to Hannibal, offering him a small smile. “I can’t even feel her kicking yet. My, uh… My first pregnancy, I uh… I started feeling him moving a little sooner than this. I think it was just because I was so scrawny, the ultrasound tech said not to worry if I don’t feel her for a few more weeks, especially since I haven’t carried a pregnancy to term and this is really the longest I’ve been... But it should be any time now, and… You’ll be with me when she does start moving.”

“Ultrasound tech? You’ve…” Hannibal trailed off, a small smile twitching at the corners of his mouth.

“Oh, yeah, I stopped at a few free clinics while I was there, no paper trail or anything. I just… I wanted to make sure that she was alright, is all.”

“She?”

“I don’t… I don’t know for certain, I didn’t ask, I didn’t look. I just… I don’t know, I just have a sense, you know?”

Hannibal let out a teary laugh. Such tears of joy were rare and beautiful coming from him. Will smiled, reaching up to swipe them away, drawing him in close. Hannibal leaned into his touch, yearning for each brush of skin, aching for what had been lost in the past months.

“I have pictures. If you want to see,” Will said.

Hannibal’s eyes lit up, mouth falling open in such wide-eyed wonder as he nodded hard, breath coming out in a shaky sort of laugh. Will had never seen such joy, never like this. He smiled, pulling his wallet from his back pocket, pulling out the folded up picture that had stayed there for the past six weeks. There was another in the car, pinned up to the visor, from three weeks prior, but the one from his twelve week check up stayed with him at all times. That had been the moment that Will had decided that he was in love, and that was the picture that stayed with him, worn and torn and weathered as it was now.

“It’s a little worn out, but she’s right there. This one was at about twelve weeks. I’ve got one from fifteen weeks too, out in the truck. She was sucking her thumb in this one, though. I think she’s pretty cute,” Will said, pointing out where her tiny hand met her mouth. Tiny fingers could hardly be made out, but Will was already wrapped around them. So, so it seemed, was Hannibal.

“She’s beautiful,” Hannibal whispered, taking the picture in his hand, fingertips brushing over the outline of their baby. “She’s so beautiful.”

“She is, isn’t she,” Will sighed, suddenly taking such immense pride in the little thing that grew within him. What had once felt like something to be hidden, some secret all for himself, now felt like something to take pride in, to share with the world, even if his world only consisted of these four walls for awhile.

Will watched as Hannibal ran his fingers over her picture, over and over again, admiring this thing that they had created. This beautiful little accident, brought about by a poorly timed phone call and a slip of memory. Such precious things that Will hadn’t wanted, but wouldn’t trade for the world.

He was beautiful when he smiled like that.

Hannibal rarely smiled with anything more than his eyes. The occasional upturn of lips, softly twitching at the corners of his mouth before falling again. He had confessed to not much caring for his teeth, too jagged and sharp, like those of the beasts the world would compare him to. But Will had always thought differently, such little imperfections beautiful, such joy undeserving of being hidden behind closed lips. But now he stood staring and smiling ear to ear, teary-eyed and joyous. And he was beautiful.

It was a sight that he looked forward to getting used to, that was for damn certain. That smile was going nowhere in the coming months, as the proof of their joining grew more evident, no longer so easily hidden beneath his clothes. He would smile like that at the sound of their heartbeat, smile like that when he felt the first kicks against the palm of his hand, smile like that when Will delivered her and he held her in his arms for the first time.

Will held no fantasies or delusions. He knew that life would not be perfect. There would be moments of pain, moments when the ghosts of his demons rose up again within the corners of his memory palace, to drag him into the dark as he slept. There would be moments when he continued to ache, moments when he would see the children that he had lost in the face of his newborn daughter. There would be moments of guilt and moments of terror. Moments when he cursed the day that he had been born.

But there was light amidst the darkness. There were hands to cradle him when he woke screaming, arms to wrap tight around his shoulders until he settled down again. There were soft kisses pressed against his forehead, words that he couldn’t quite translate but could understand in perfect clarity. There would be kicks and jolts in his belly, and a baby to cradle tight against his chest. Perhaps it wasn’t quite a happy ending, perhaps there was no happily ever after, but they had come damn near close enough. And Will Graham had fallen in love with this middle ground.

“I wanna go to bed.”

He was rarely so direct, but some directness was likely needed, lest they spend the whole night weeping in each other’s arms. Though perhaps that would not be the worst way to spend the evening. But Will wanted closer than that. He wanted to feel every single inch of him. It had been far too long.

Hannibal’s breath hitched, eyes turning to meet him. Incredulous for a moment, as though not quite comprehending what was being said, before he smiled again. This time softer, hidden behind pursed lips, but his eyes were still alight. Gently, he placed the picture on the counter before offering Will an outstretched hand. Will took it, fingers grasping tight to him as the alpha guided him toward the bedroom at the end of the hall.

The clothes came off quickly, discarded into a pile on the floor between gentle kisses pressed against his lips, up and down his neck, peppered across every bare inch of flesh. Will held him close, tears falling softly down his cheeks, matching the ones that stained Hannibal’s. They were both overcome with the need to touch and be touched, to hold and be held, so much so that each brush of fingers against bare skin felt overwhelming, tears drawn to their eyes as they shared such intimate embraces.

Hannibal dropped to his knees before him once the clothes had been stripped away, both of them hardening against each other, like falling down to worship, falling to his knees to pray. His hands ghosted down his sides, tracing the outline of his body before pressing his lips against the swell of his bump, praises on his tongue.

Will smiled, fingers raking through silvery strands of hair. They looked a little more silver now, just ever so slightly, graying a little more with each passing day. He wore it well, though.

He found himself quickly growing impatient. Such reverent worship could be saved for later, but now, Will wanted him, and all of him. He wanted to feel the entirety of his body moving against him, inside of him, until there was no telling where one ended and the other began. To be so hopelessly intertwined was what he had ached for for so long now, and he didn’t want to wait another second for it.

“C’mon,” Will sighed softly. “I want you inside me.”

Hannibal turned his gaze back toward his eyes, a small smile drawn to his teary eyes. Will held out a hand for him to take, and pulled him to his feet, back toward the bed, claiming his lips again.

Hannibal’s hands spread apart his legs, falling in between them, rubbing and necking up against him as his hole began to wetten. Will already knew for damn certain that this wasn’t going to last long. Their first time together out of heat had been emotional, not unlike this, with teary eyes and kisses all over. And, of course, Hannibal had only lasted about two minutes before knotting. Will already figured that this would prove to be no different.

But he didn’t mind it. It didn’t need to be long. As long as he had Hannibal inside of him, knotted to him, bound to him, it didn’t quite matter. They were together again, and that was

all that mattered.

Will's hand snaked down between them, curling around Hannibal's length. His cock was hard and heavy and thick in his hand, twitching and pulsing with his own aching arousal. Will gave him a cursory stroke, foreskin gliding over the slick, bulbous head of his cock, the movement still mesmerizing. Will's breath hitched as another pulse of slick gushed from him in response, in preparation for what was to come as Will lined Hannibal's cock up to his leaking hole.

"Are you certain you're ready?" Hannibal asked, concern etched over his features.

"I'm ready," Will assured, voice barely above a whisper.

Hannibal nodded, burying his face into the crook of Will's neck as Will coaxed him inside, pulling him in deeper until the head breached his sphincter. Will drew in a breath as Hannibal situated himself, adjusting position so that he was aimed directly for his prostate, caring more for Will's pleasure than his own, more careful with him now than he had ever been before. He pushed in slowly, inching in, waiting for confirmation in the form of soft noises drawn from the omega's lips. His moans were quiet, hushed, whimpering things, uncontrollable as the tears began to well up in his eyes, fingernails digging for purchase down his back. Hannibal clung to him for dear life, fearing the fall that would come with letting go, and Will held him just as tightly as Hannibal settled into him.

Will buried his face into the crook of his alpha's neck, taking in his scent. It was familiar and it was soft and it was his and it was home. Hannibal's arms wrapped tight around his body, tears falling hot against his neck, and Will's arms locked around his neck, his legs locked around his waist. They lay intertwined, in mind, in body, in soul.

Will lost count of the minutes spent still, neither moving for fear of it ending. Hannibal simply lay sheathed inside, waiting. He wanted to savor what had been laid out before him, what had been offered up unto him, what had at last come home to him. He wanted to take a moment to savor how beautifully Will had laid himself out for him, the way his hole twitched and fluttered and pulsed around his cock, the hitching of his breath and the quivering of his muscles, the way he fell lax beneath him and surrendered up everything.

The months had ticked by, and his body had changed. His midsection felt thicker with the burgeoning baby bump, still newly formed. His scent had changed with the shift in hormones. He had a few more scars, a few more calluses. But all in all, he was still the same man that Hannibal had fallen in love with. Still just Will. Still his Will.

"Mano meilė, mano meilė. Iš jūros, nuo kapo, kurį sugrįžote pas mane. Mano mylimasis, mano brangusis," Hannibal murmured, his fingers reaching up through Will's curls, clinging to him like the gods might pluck them apart.

They had been living in Lithuania, but Will still hardly knew the language. He knew the necessities, but had hardly mastered it. A few words plucked out here and there, but such foreign words spoken too quickly and too softly for him to pluck them out. Still, his ears managed to cling to two words.

Mano meilė, mano meilė.

My love, my love.

“Move, Han,” Will whispered, begged. “C’mon, let me feel you, baby.”

Hannibal just trembled, another sob ripped from his chest, frozen beneath the weight of his own emotion. Will’s fingers reached up to pull through his hair, gently carding through the silvery strands. Slowly, his hands drifted down the sides of his neck, pushing up against his shoulders before cupping his face in his hands, swiping away the tears before offering up his hands in surrender.

“Hold my hands, Han.”

Another sob was wracked from Hannibal’s chest above him, all hopes for composure dashed as his fingers laced through Will’s, pinning them down against the bed as he collapsed over him again.

This time though, there came the jerky thrust of hips. Uncoordinated and unsteady, but still pointed, drawing a soft cry from Will’s throat as his fingers tightened through Hannibal’s. He offered another thrust, as uncoordinated as the last, but pleasurable nonetheless. Such apex of emotion, the drag over his prostate, and Hannibal’s stomach rubbing against Will’s cock dragged him close to the edge in seconds, and Will knew that neither of them would be lasting long.

His movements started slow. A thrust delivered into him before he stalled, settling at the hilt until he gathered up the strength to offer him another. It was slow, and it was good, and it was torturous.

“Aš prisiekiu jus puoselėti. Pažadu apsaugoti jus. Su mano paskutiniu kvėpavimu, mano meilė. Pažadu, kad niekada neleisiu jums eiti.” Will couldn’t make out the words, but he knew their meanings anyway. He knew the sonnets and epics that could be written in Hannibal’s love.

Hannibal’s breath was hot against his neck, tears falling down against his mating gland. Unmarked and untouched by teeth or scar, such permanent markings so long delayed. Perhaps Hannibal had already marked him, in his own ways. The thin white line that ran across his forehead, the thick, jagged scar across his abdomen, they had marked his flesh for years now. Will had left his share of marks on Hannibal, too, drawn in two lines down his wrists. But none would signify what the teeth marks along the side of his neck would signify. None would come so close. None would bind them in this way.

“I want you to bond with me, Hannibal,” he whispered.

Hannibal pulled back, eyes blown wide at such requests, staring down in speechless shock as his mouth moved to open, but no sound came out. His thrusting stilled, cock sheathed inside of him again, staring dumbfounded.

“You… You what?” Hannibal breathed.

“Bond with me. Mark me, Han, please,” Will whimpered, aching for more.

He let out a shuddered breath, and nodded.

Hannibal buried his face into the crook of Will’s neck, tongue and teeth lining up against his mating gland as he redoubled his efforts. The tears still fell unrestrained onto the pillow beneath him, and tears formed within Will’s own eyes, spilling softly with each thrust into his body.

Will could hardly drag the air into his lungs as Hannibal picked up speed, setting a steady, nearly brutal pace, making fervent love to him, chasing after his impending orgasm as his knot began to form at the base. Even still, there was something soft in such acts, something gentle, something intimate. He wanted to bond with him, solidify what had been felt between them for more years than Will could even remember. A bond as old as time would be marked across his neck.

It was beautiful.

“Aš tave myliu, Will. *Aš tave myliu.”*

Those words needed no translation. Will already knew the meaning.

He gasped for breath as Hannibal buried himself deep inside of him, and Will let out a whine, almost embarrassingly high. And with that, Hannibal was coming. He felt his knot pop past his rim. He felt Hannibal’s seed spill as his cock twitched and throbbed hard within him, and…

Will’s orgasm followed unexpectedly, his seed spilling hot between them as his vision blurred white and a shout was drawn from his chest. As the cry left his lips and his semen spurted hot across their bellies, Hannibal’s teeth dug into flesh. Pain mingled with pleasure in this chaotic symphony, blood spilling into Hannibal’s mouth as he lapped it away, suckling at the mark he had left.

Will felt a tingling up and down his spine, a sudden dizziness as their bond solidified, sacred and old as time itself, binding them together until death, until they found themselves at the bottom of the deep blue sea. Will fell lax beneath him, thumb tracing gently over his fingers.

Hannibal lay above him, tears still flowing uncontrolled, too overcome by his own emotion to keep himself together. Will didn’t mind, though. He smiled through the tears in his own eyes, and held tighter to the alpha above him, clinging to his words.

“Aš tave myliu, mylimasis… My omega.”

Fin.

Chapter End Notes

That's all folks. Hit me with some love maybe?

Translation for the shitty google translated lithuanian bit:
1. "my love, my love. from the sea, from the grave you returned to me. my beloved, my dear."
2. "I vow to cherish you. I vow to protect you, with my dying breath, my love. I vow to never let you go."
3. "I love you, Will, I love you."

End Notes

waves cup like a beggar except instead of giving me spare change leave comments

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